

Chaucer's Scribes

London Textual Production, 1384–1432

LAWRENCE WARNER



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CHAUCER'S SCRIBES

The 2004 announcement that Chaucer's scribe had been discovered resulted in a paradigm shift in medieval studies. Adam Pynkhurst dominated the classroom, became a fictional character, and led to suggestions that this identification should prompt the abandonment of our understanding of the development of London English and acceptance that the clerks of the Guildhall were promoting vernacular literature as part of a concerted political program. In this meticulously researched study, Lawrence Warner challenges the narratives and conclusions of recent scholarship. In place of the accepted story, Warner provides a fresh, more nuanced one in which many more scribes, anonymous ones, worked in conditions we are only beginning to understand. Bringing to light new information – not least, hundreds of documents in the hand of one of the most important fifteenth-century scribes of Chaucer and Langland – this book represents an important intervention in the field of Middle English studies.

LAWRENCE WARNER is Reader in Medieval English at King's College London. His previous publications include *The Myth of "Piers Plowman"* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), which won the English Association's 2016 Beatrice White Prize for outstanding scholarly work in the field of English Literature before 1590, and *The Lost History of "Piers Plowman"* (2011), which received an Honorable Mention for the Society for Textual Scholarship's 2013 Richard J. Finneran Award.

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London Textual Production, 1384–1432

LAWRENCE WARNER

King's College London



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For Sebastian and Eloise with love

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Abbreviations

BL	London, British Library
<i>ChauR</i>	<i>Chaucer Review</i>
EETS	Early English Text Society
<i>JEBS</i>	<i>Journal of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printed History</i>
<i>LALME</i>	<i>Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English</i> . Eds. Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, and Michael Benskin, with the assistance of Margaret Laing and Keith Williamson, 4 vols. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
<i>MÆ</i>	<i>Medium Ævum</i>
<i>MED</i>	<i>Middle English Dictionary</i> . Eds. Hans Kurath et al. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952–2001. http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med
<i>NM</i>	<i>Neuphilologische Mitteilungen</i>
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
<i>RES</i>	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
<i>SAC</i>	<i>Studies in the Age of Chaucer</i>
<i>SB</i>	<i>Studies in Bibliography</i>
<i>TLS</i>	<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>
<i>YLS</i>	<i>Yearbook of Langland Studies</i>

Introduction

The Pynkhurst Phenomenon

A history of London textual production ca. 1375–1425, remarkable for its richness, elegance, and detail, has emerged from Linne Mooney’s essay “Chaucer’s Scribe” (2006), which effected a “Copernican revolution” in the field of Middle English studies,¹ and Mooney and Estelle Stubbs’s subsequent book *Scribes and the City: London Guildhall Clerks and the Dissemination of Middle English Literature 1375–1425* (2013), which elaborated on that essay and identified the Guildhall as a major site of vernacular manuscript production in the London of this era. In around 1355, so we learn, someone of the name Adam Pynkhurst married one Joanna; this man would become a King’s Archer, a very prominent position in the service of the realm. In this capacity Adam became acquainted with Geoffrey Chaucer, fellow member of Edward III’s household. He later retired to his family’s home region of Surrey–Sussex, where he held lands, but in the meantime his son or nephew, and namesake, came to be Chaucer’s scribe, copying *Boece* and *Troilus* (perhaps in copies, fragments of which are still extant) for the poet in the 1380s and earning a notorious place as addressee of a light-hearted stanza bemoaning his copying errors. He also did bureaucratic work for some guilds, especially the Mercers, and for the former mayor John of Northampton, and he produced a beautiful *Piers Plowman*, thus altering our understanding of topics ranging from Chaucer’s political affiliations to the development of standard English.²

For it is as “Chaucer’s own scrivener” that Pynkhurst is so important, that is to say, as postulated addressee of that stanza already mentioned addressed to one “Adam scryveyne” and as copyist both of the Hengwrt *Canterbury Tales*, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS Peniarth 392D (Hg), which in this narrative was undertaken just before the poet’s death and possibly under his supervision, and of the lavish Ellesmere *Canterbury Tales*, San Marino, Huntington Library MS EL 26 C.9 (El), his greatest production.³ This account has it that during this period, and

perhaps earlier, Pynkhurst the younger held a clerkly position in the Guildhall, recording a handful of entries in Letter Book I. He was one of four main clerks who combined their work for the City with the copying of vernacular literature, suggestive of a concerted Lancastrian policy to promote English, for which the founding of the Guildhall Library in the 1420s might have been intended. The other three were Richard Osborn, Chamber Clerk of the Guildhall and copyist of *Piers Plowman*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Siege of Jerusalem*, *Mandeville's Travels*, and much else; John Marchaunt, Common Clerk, called "Scribe D" for his stint on Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.2 (in which Pynkhurst was "B"),⁴ copyist of Chaucer, Langland, Trevisa, and especially Gower; and John Carpenter, Marchaunt's successor, identified now as scribe of two Gowers and a *Troilus*.

By 1380, Adam Pynkhurst Sr., assuming the accuracy of Mooney's account, was a very rich man. This is no surprise, given his award of an annuity of six pence per day for life by Edward III in April 1370, the year Adam and Joanna rented a property in Bramley, Surrey,⁵ and his wealth has only recently been confirmed – to leave Mooney's portrait for a moment – by the revelation that the 1381 Poll Tax records for Bramley show that the Pynkhurst couple paid 6s 8d, their two servants John Houwyk and John Colles paying 4d and 6d respectively.⁶ As Gary Baker has observed, "even if he were paying only half the 6s. 8d. for himself," the other half paid by Joanna, "and potentially less if paying for other un-listed family members, this was still three times the amount the average person was expected to contribute."⁷ Nothing about the identity of the King's Archer as the scrivener would present difficulties to any of this. That his entry in the Scriveners Company Common Paper "is the longest, the most rhetorically ornate, and the most elegantly copied of all," in Richard Firth Green's judgment, "speaks volumes ... about Pinkhurst's prominent position in the pecking order of the fledgling scriveners' company," a prominence that would make good sense if he was this wealthy King's Archer.⁸ And the listing of another royal archer, John Kenne, as a weaver (*textor*) in the 1379 Poll Tax records mitigates any sense that King's Archers were only military men.⁹

At this point the other major figure of Linne Mooney's story, not as rich as Pynkhurst but still notable as scribe, poet, and civil servant, comes into the picture of the Guildhall's central role in Middle English literary production. For "Scribe E," and possible supervisor, of the Trinity Gower of which in this account Pynkhurst was "B," was Thomas Hoccleve, clerk at the Privy Seal, in which capacity he came to know Marchaunt, his apprentice John Carpenter, and, most remarkably, Chaucer himself, on whose

behalf he wrote a petition in 1399, as Pynkhurst had done as well. Hoccleve remained active, if beset by frequent psychological and financial hardships, in the 1410s and 1420s. Recent years have witnessed two major additions to this history. First is Mooney's claim that London, British Library MS Royal 17 D.XVIII, an ordinary-looking *Regiment of Princes*, is in fact a holograph copy, with new readings reflecting the changed circumstances of both country and poet in the year since this poem was first issued.¹⁰ The second, perhaps more surprising, is Simon Horobin's argument that Hoccleve was "Chaucer's first editor," who supervised Pynkhurst's (that is, Scribe B's) work on Hengwrt, Ellesmere, and the Trinity Gower.¹¹

This is a thrilling account, and it is no wonder that the Pynkhurst identification in particular has captured so many imaginations. And yet we have already seen the story's need to interpret the historical record in light of the attributions at issue rather than vice versa, in the form of the division of "Adam Pynkhurst" into two separate individuals. The alternative is to believe that Pynkhurst was "sixty-five when writing the Hengwrt manuscript around the time of Chaucer's death in 1400; at least seventy-three when copying his stint in Trinity College MS R.3.2 in 1408 or later; and seventy-five when his hand last appears in the Letter Books (1410). This seems a long career," say Mooney and Stubbs, so that, while not impossible, "the balance still seems tipped in favour of there having been two men of this name."¹² The possibility that one man named Adam Pynkhurst did all this copying dissipates further still when one considers his wealth, suggesting the absence of any need to work for money; the short lifetimes even of the rich in that era, half of whom had died by age fifty;¹³ and new evidence, presented in [Chapter 5](#), which, if Pynkhurst's placement in the Guildhall is accurate, means he must still have been at work in 1416, when he was about eighty-one. On top of this, again, is the absence both of any positive support for the split of Adam Pynkhurst into two men and of any mention of the younger in any historical records after ca. 1401.

That date, 1401, is the latest for the final known Pynkhurst life record, not mentioned by Mooney, though Jane Roberts brought it to light a few years before the most recent account of his life. Kew, National Archives SC 8/134/6655 is a petition in French dated to 1399–1401 "by one 'Adam Penkhurst' requesting confirmation of grants made by Edward III and Richard II to the petitioner."¹⁴ At issue are "provenantz de countees de Sussex & Surrey," so there is no question of this referring to an unrelated man of the identical name; the earliest known document mentioning Adam Pynkhurst is from the Feet of Fines for Surrey, 1355.¹⁵ If there were two Adam Pynkhursts this 1401 petition in itself presents no problem.

The complication arises from Roberts's observation that the hand of the petition "writes a confident Secretary script that bears comparison with the oath in the Common Paper, although a less formal piece of writing" in that it "lacks the extravagant embellishments of the oath and has a more restrained sprinkling of Anglicana letter forms."¹⁶ Chapter 2 will turn to the relevant paleographical features of Pynkhurst on which basis I will say here that I deem it likely that this is the hand of the famous scribe. The simplest if not inevitable explanation is that this script on behalf of "Adam Penkhurst" is so close to that of our "Adam Pynkhurst" because they are the same man, who retired to Surrey in 1400.

The identification of "Chaucer's scribe," then, whose immense impact on the field of Middle English can scarcely be measured, necessitates the existence of two Adam Pynkhursts despite the absence of any evidence for such a split and the presence of suggestive evidence against it. And this is before questions of handwriting, dialect, Guildhall records, or any other of the bodies of evidence at issue arise, each of which presents equally pressing interpretive dilemmas which can be answered in only one way if we are to accept that Pynkhurst was Scribe B and thus was Chaucer's scribe. Yet much of the identification's power inheres in the sense that no such interpretive dilemmas interfered, that is, that Mooney had "discovered" something whose meaning was self-evident. "I was amazed he had not been found before," she told one news agency: "It took about a second to recognise. I was so excited";¹⁷ in another account, "I stopped still in the middle of a busy intersection as the penny dropped – as the British say – and I said aloud, 'Oh, his name is Adam!'"¹⁸ and in the 2006 essay "Chaucer's Scribe" itself, too, the case is transparent: "Certain decorative features reveal him immediately."¹⁹

Chaucer's Scribes argues for a more diffuse history of vernacular book production in London in this era than that recounted above. Among its conclusions are that Adam Pynkhurst was one man, and that no evidence suggests he copied Chaucer's works, not to mention was Chaucer's scribe. The plural of this book's title, scribes, indicates not any postulated employees of a poet, as Pynkhurst/Scribe B has been assumed to be, but copyists or contributors to, at various states of remove, the manuscripts of *Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, and *Boece*. Earliest is the Goldsmiths' clerk Thomas Usk, copying or perhaps just reading the *Troilus* around 1384–85; the latest, ninety years later, completed another manuscript of that poem whose original exemplar had most likely been the Usk copy. Over the near-century between those dates, Scribes B and D between them copied four of the earliest *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts, while B produced a *Troilus*

as well, now only a fragment; Hoccleve, E on the Trinity Gower, filled in a few lines left blank in Hengwrt; the scribe of Huntington MS Hm 114 abandoned a *Troilus* (the one eventually completed ca. 1474 as just mentioned) before including that poem in one of his two compilations of Middle English literature in the 1420s or 30s; Carpenter, a senior clerk who was instrumental in the foundation of the Guildhall Library, seems to have been at work on vernacular literature, and has recently been identified as scribe of a *Troilus*; and finally Pynkhurst himself might have decorated a *Boece*.

Some of these men might have known Chaucer but there is no evidence that he employed any of them as scribe. Neither did any of these clerks copy his works exclusively. Scribe B's name grows from his work on Gower; D was a Gower specialist who also copied Trevisa, Langland, and the *Brut*; the Hm 114 scribe produced the longest extant *Piers Plowman* as well as *The Siege of Jerusalem*, Mandeville, *Brut*, and others; the sole literary manuscript I think Carpenter did copy is a Gower; and Hoccleve's only sustained scribal literary stint of a work other than his own was the *Confessio* as well. Pynkhurst's sole extant literary manuscript, so I will argue, is a *Piers Plowman* not a Chaucer. This book is called *Chaucer's Scribes*, then, not because it comprehensively treats those with a right to that title, but because Middle English literary studies is in urgent need of a rigorous critique of the world created by "Chaucer's Scribe," with the happy additional circumstance that nearly all of these hands are indeed found somewhere in manuscripts of his works. The exceptions are Carpenter, though as mentioned a *Troilus* has been attributed to him, and Richard Frampton, who comes closest via a potential connection with the Hm 114 scribe, discussed in [Chapter 5](#).

This book presents a new account of the production of vernacular literature in London between 1384 and 1432, with one visit to the 1470s, an account in which the development of the English language, these scribes' connections with institutions like the Guildhall and Goldsmiths' Hall, and other topics far beyond that of their names feature prominently. The story of a single scribe, Adam Pynkhurst, who was "Chaucer's" and now belongs, as it were, to Chaucer studies, does not account very well for the extant historical, paleographical, and linguistic evidence. Neither does the account of his reintroduction to the field as surveyed above adequately respond to the history of that field. The seeming obviousness of the Pynkhurst identification explains the alacrity with which so many Chaucerians (including me) embraced it. The articulations of this "obvious" character invariably include a personal pronoun: "I was amazed *he* had not been found before."

Who is “he”? On the one hand, Reuters quoted this line because the answer was “Chaucer’s scribe” ([note 17](#)), and the “major scoop” of the 2004 New Chaucer Society congress was “Mooney’s utterly persuasive disclosure of the identity” not of Scribe B, but rather “of ‘Adam Scriveyn’ as Adam Pynkhurst.”²⁰ But on the other, when Mooney says that “certain decorative features reveal *him* immediately,” the referent of that pronoun can only be the Hengwrt-Ellesmere scribe.

Mooney’s claim, that is, came about not from paleographical analysis, which at most would have given Scribe B a name, but rather from the assumption that because this name was Adam he must have been the addressee of the lyric “Chauciers wordes. a Geffrey vn to Adame his owen scryveyne.” This is not a disinterested conclusion that could take about a second to reach. It also needs stressing that “Chaucer’s scribe,” both as concept and essay, is the product of collaboration that turned, eventually, into a solitary quest. In 2011 Jane Roberts recounted that seven years earlier she had happened to see close similarities in script between the Mercers’ petition of 1387/88 and the hands of such London figures as Scribes B and D. Mooney, she reports, heard about this, “got in touch with [her] and began searching for documents in similar handwriting in the National Archives, the Guildhall, and the Mercers’ Hall. Regrettably,” says Roberts, “despite a summer filled with the excitements of chewing happily over her discoveries, it turned out that we were not in agreement as to the relationship between scribe B and his growing portfolio.”²¹ Mooney’s announcement of the discovery of Chaucer’s scribe makes much more sense in light of Roberts’s account. The parameters of Mooney’s quest, sparked by the evidence that B was at work in London in the 1380s, would have been determined by the critical history of “Adam scryveyne,” leading, in other words, straight to Pynkhurst’s confirmation in the Scriveners Company Common Paper. [Chapter 1](#) covers this story.

Whether or not its subsequent influence grew from the assumptions that an obvious truth had revealed itself to a single scholar, Mooney’s announcement opened out exciting opportunities. Its biggest impact was surely in the classroom,²² but a vibrant Pynkhurst scholarly industry, too, quickly materialized. Most scholars, including me, noted it as an accepted part of Middle English literary and textual scholarship; some accepted the identification and built on it; others queried certain claims but embraced its main conclusion; and one or two have, very recently, followed Roberts in calling it into question.²³ An impressive range of topics was affected: the authority and respective dates of Hengwrt and Ellesmere, Chaucer’s political affiliations and biography, the development of London English and

its status in modern critical editing, and much else. In 2012 Pynkhurst was awarded an entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, reserved for “people who have left their mark on an aspect of national life,”²⁴ and The National Library of Wales has claimed that Hengwrt’s importance “has recently been magnified by the identification of its scribe as Adam Pinkhurst, one of Chaucer’s London-based associates.”²⁵

Meanwhile Mooney continued her project of scribal attribution, much of it together with Stubbs and Horobin. This culminated in the 2011 launch of the *Late Medieval English Scribes* web database www.medievalscribes.com by all three scholars, and the 2013 publication of Mooney and Stubbs’s *Scribes and the City*, for which the way was prepared by a new collection of press releases (“Research Reveals Cradle of English Literature” and so forth).²⁶ These materials quickly gave rise to a new body of scholarship,²⁷ but also, entertainingly, to a new trend in fiction. “Now him I remember,” remarks a character in Bruce Holsinger’s *The Invention of Fire* (2015), having been queried by the sleuth John Gower regarding the copyist of an important document: “Strange face, that scribbling carl, all burned up, and an odd name to match. Pinkhouse or some likeness.” Gower fills out the picture when they meet: “Rather young” (this is 1386), “yet with a steady hand at the quill, the scrivener had already established himself as an invaluable scribal asset for numerous parties, keeping accounts for the mercers’ guild and the wool custom while working doggedly for the Guildhall.”²⁸ And in Amy Rowland’s *The Transcriptionist* (2014), set in modern-day New York, the protagonist Lena converses with a scholar who says she has “discovered the identity of Chaucer’s scrivener, which helps certify Chaucer’s work. He had written a poem about Adam.” Upon learning that Lena, a newspaper transcriptionist, has “a personal interest in scribes,” this academic continues: “I’d been on the trail for quite a while and I finally compared the two signatures. The evidence has been there for centuries, but I suppose no one had looked for it before.” She ends up showing off to Lena her “database of scribes in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England.”²⁹ Thus did the small world of fictional medievalists – Lucky Jim, Rosamund Merridew, William Stoner, Persse McGarrigle’s head of department Liam McCreedy – welcome another denizen.

Not every note struck has been celebratory or commemorative. Christopher de Hamel paints a dark picture of outrage within “the British academic establishment”: “Without the courtesy of weighing her evidence, there were those who instantly prejudged any identifications by Linne Mooney to be inherently preposterous.” This “dreadfully unjust” response gave rise to “on-going controversies over Adam Pinkhurst [which] have

come to resemble the pamphlet wars of the eighteenth century, driven as much by faith and jealousy as by reason and historical verification.”³⁰ To be sure, de Hamel needs to create a sense of controversy which he will adjudicate (“Our first witness to be called in the trial of Adam Pynkhurst”),³¹ as some readers might say about *Chaucer’s Scribes* as well. And de Hamel renders a Scottish verdict of case “not proven” in line with my rejection of the identification. Still, I think it worthwhile to rebut this account. Given that “it took about a second to recognise” and his identity was “revealed immediately,” it is unclear how these scholars could have done otherwise than “instantly prejudice” Mooney’s claim. And the roles of the British scholars Roberts, Stubbs, and Horobin in the story lessen any sense that the U.K. was outraged at an American’s intrusion into their territory. Yet most misleading in my view is the reference to continuing controversies that have revived the spirit of the pamphlet wars. The sole sustained critique of the Pynkhurst identification, in print at least, is by Roberts herself, to which there have been no replies to date; otherwise, as one Oxford Chaucerian has observed, “everyone is agreed on the importance of the discovery.”³²

Among the premises of *Chaucer’s Scribes* is that, questions of accuracy aside, to call the identification of Pynkhurst as Scribe B a “discovery” does justice to the histories neither of medieval textual production nor of modern scholarly work. The brilliance of “Chaucer’s Scribe” is not that it uncovers previously hidden facts but that it creates a powerful, elegant, and hugely attractive world. Such a characterization does not detract from its accomplishments in the slightest: all work in the humanities ought to aim so high. And all announcements of such power, especially, ought to invite continual testing and challenge. In accepting that invitation, this book will in part mount the negative argument that Adam Pynkhurst was not scribe of Hengwrt or Ellesmere, referent of “Adam scryveyne,” Chaucer’s scribe, a Guildhall clerk, or copyist of the Mercers’ petition of 1387/88, and that many of the arguments that built on such beliefs, too, are inaccurate. But the more important and positive argument will be that London literary production in this era was astounding and unprecedented precisely for its resistance to any localization (e.g., to the Guildhall) or direct connection of any of the many scribes at work in the environs of London, Southwark, and Westminster with Chaucer, Langland, or most other authors (Gower is a different story). [Chapter 1](#), “Adam,” fills out the point that so long as there exist viable interpretations of “Adam Scryveyne,” as I shall call the lyric for convenience, other than that it is addressed to a historically identifiable scribe named Adam who worked for the poet, the most

that can be said of Pynkhurst, assuming the paleographical case that he copied Hengwrt and Ellesmere is accurate, is precisely that: that he copied those and a few other manuscripts. The chapter concludes by showing in detail, on the grounds of metrical and linguistic analysis, that this lyric is unChaucerian in any case.

Chapter 2, “The Pynkhurst Canon,” argues that all paleographical evidence shows that the only literary manuscript Pynkhurst copied was Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.17, main text *Piers Plowman*, his other extant productions comprising some bureaucratic and ornamental work. The second subject of the chapter, after that indicated by the title, is the silent shift in the use of paleographical evidence that enabled Mooney’s explosive announcement. If my attribution of Trinity B.15.17 to Pynkhurst is accurate, the urgent question arises as to whether its language supports Horobin and Mooney’s attribution of that copy to the Hengwrt-Ellesmere scribe. Chapter 3, “Pynkhurst’s London English and the Dilemma of Copy-Text,” argues that the answer is no, a shift in the norms of dialectal study producing recent suggestions otherwise. It then turns to the larger theoretical question of the relationship of dialectology with other disciplines, via the central topics of “Type 111” English and of the best way to present the authorial *Piers Plowman* B to readers today.

The scribe of Huntington Hm 114 (*Piers Plowman*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *Mandeville’s Travels*, etc.) has been the subject of more scholarly essays in the past decade than has Pynkhurst himself. Mooney and Stubbs identify him as Richard Osborn, clerk of the chamberlain 1400–37, on the basis of what they call “quite conclusive evidence.” Chapter 4 first shows that the authors have misread or misunderstood the evidence behind that identification, before bringing to light hundreds of new items in his hand ca. 1397–1432 from the Guildhall and the Goldsmiths’ Hall. He was indeed a Guildhall clerk, just not Osborn, and he had left that institution by the time he turned to literary copying. Part of the story concerns the former Goldsmiths’ clerk, author, and doomed political pamphleteer Thomas Usk, who gets connected across the decades to the Hm 114 scribe upon his move from the Guildhall to the Goldsmiths. Chapter 5, “The Guildhall Clerks,” works through Mooney and Stubbs’s identifications of their Osborn’s colleagues: Scribe D, specialist in Gower manuscripts, whom they take to have been Osborn’s supervisor John Marchaunt, common clerk; their Adam Pynkhurst, placed in the Guildhall on the basis of attributions of items in Letter Book I; Marchaunt’s successor John Carpenter, to whom are attributed two Gowers and a *Troilus*; and Richard Frampton, whose work on an item in common with their Osborn helps secure his inclusion

in the group. The chapter casts doubt on these claims, arguing that more diffuse historical forces are at work.

The discovery by A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes that the poet and Privy Seal clerk Thomas Hoccleve was Scribe E of the Trinity Gower, combined with their subsequent identification of his hand among those filling in the blank spaces of Hengwrt, placed Hoccleve at the center of Middle English textual studies. At stake in such claims as that he was Chaucer's first editor, as throughout this book, are both the state of paleographical, codicological, linguistic, and textual scholarship, and the methodologies by which it arrived here. The [final chapter](#), "Hoccleve's Hengwrt, Hoccleve's Holographs," argues that Hoccleve remains absolutely central, and yet impossible to pin down in the ways attempted since 2011 or so.

No single picture of London textual production ca. 1384–1432 emerges from my study of these figures. That is the book's major point: scholarship's embrace of Adam Pynkhurst as Chaucer's scribe, of the Guildhall as cradle of his and his peers' literary works, and of Hoccleve as his editor finds little evidentiary support. That said, certain trends do emerge: a fluidity of these clerks' associations, such as Pynkhurst's between the King's Archers and the Scriveners Company, or the Hm 114's between the Guildhall and the Goldsmiths; a general consistency of language within each scribe's writing and spelling practices, at odds with some influential recent claims; the incubating of literary production by institutions and individuals in Westminster and Southwark as well as London; and, with the major exception of Scribe D, who seems likely to have had some sort of affiliation with Gower, a lack of any evidence that any of these scribes knew the authors whose works they copied. This is the case even for Hoccleve, whose hand is in Hengwrt and who claims a friendship with Chaucer.

By necessity *Chaucer's Scribes* expends much energy on previous scholarship, but as a core part of doing so it also offers a substantial body of new information and interpretations of existing evidence. [Chapter 1](#) reads "Adam Scryveyne" in light of our knowledge of Chaucerian meter for the first time, so far as I know; [Chapter 2](#) reveals the extent to which a certain decorative motif central to the identification of Pynkhurst as Chaucer's scribe pervaded the deeds, charters, and wills of the era; and [Chapter 4](#) brings to light strong evidence that Thomas Usk might have copied or read a *Troilus and Criseyde* that remained in the Goldsmiths' Hall for forty years and that the Hm 114 scribe was the most active clerk in the city courts from 1404 to 1410. All of this is of a piece with this book's account of claims made by Mooney and her collaborators. *Chaucer's Scribes*, that is, tells a story of modern scholarly methodologies no less than of medieval

scribal activities. There is no alternative, since the two topics are one. If the book succeeds, then many of its local arguments concerning scholarship of ca. 2006–15 risk eventually seeming moot, at least to those readers who want to know the general consensus only. I still believe, though, that the larger claims of *Chaucer's Scribes* will retain their value; indeed, since it urges continual testing of precisely the sorts of arguments I here mount, the acceptance of its claims on the authority of either myself or others who assent would be a sign of its failure, not success.

Much of the focus on methodologies in *Chaucer's Scribes*, of course, concerns paleography and scribal attribution, and especially the ways in which the concepts of aspect (in short, the impression a hand makes on the viewer's first encounter) and duct (how letters are formed) have been sidelined by other powerful forces. On a number of occasions I call recent identifications into question, and sometimes I propose new attributions, always on the basis of a straightforward set of criteria. I assent to or propose the attribution if: 1) the aspect and duct of the items in question are close enough to each other to merit comparison, 2) their similarities in distinctive letter forms (and, sometimes, decorative motifs) are such as to suggest the strong probability that a single hand was responsible, 3) their respective orthographies are substantially identical, and 4) their differences, if any, lend themselves easily to other explanations. In my judgment many recent identifications go about things in reverse, deciding that given specimens are by the same hand despite the absence of identical aspects, linguistic features, and letter forms, which are then explained as instances of a change in habits over time or the like, and even presented as evidence for the attribution rather than, as seems apparent, against it.

Yet paleography is often not the primary methodology at work behind the Pynkhurst phenomenon. [Chapter 1](#) does not concern paleography at all. In [Chapter 4](#) I assent to all attributions to the Hm 114 scribe made to date even while I strongly dispute Mooney and Stubbs's identification of him as Richard Osborn. And even if the hand of the proposed new Hoccleve holograph, discussed in [Chapter 6](#), were identical to those of his accepted ones, other bodies of evidence show that he could not have written it. Paleography neither happens in a vacuum – no one can make a hand at work in 1450 the copyist of a document produced in 1350, or a London scribe of 1400 into a flawless copyist of a document in Mandarin – nor occupies a more “scientific” plane than do its peers within Middle English studies. The discipline of historical linguistics, in particular, has in my judgment been hampered by its willingness to accept attributions that it was well placed to dismantle. The secondary, if still essential, goal of this

book is to encourage a more nuanced appreciation of the ways in which the more technical sides of our discipline are inextricably connected. If I were more ambitious I would have also urged a fuller embrace of those technical approaches by literary-critical, or “interpretive,” scholars, and of literary approaches by codicologists, paleographers, and the like; as it stands, [Chapter 1](#) is primarily about this relationship, [Chapter 4](#) advocates for the inclusion of the Plea and Memoranda Rolls and their peers in our definitions of this era’s literature, and [Chapter 5](#)’s reading of two passages from the *Canterbury Tales* helps to unravel one of the most influential recent scribal identifications.

Adam Pynkhurst’s explosive entry into Middle English studies has offered a rare opportunity to look hard into the mirror and ask what it is we really value. Insofar as this book attempts to take up that opportunity, my hope is that it will be worthwhile even to those readers who already rejected the Pynkhurst attribution, and perhaps especially to those who might still accept it after all is said and done.

CHAPTER I

Adam

“Sometimes, after many long years of pursuit, answers emerge. And sometimes, a certain amount of serendipity enters the picture.” So muses Mary Robertson in the Huntington Library newsletter, her topic being the events of one morning in early 2004, when Linne Mooney thought she had spotted the hand of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* in the Mercers’ Company account book, and then thought so again during the lunch break, two blocks away at the Guildhall, where on page 56 of the Scriveners Company Common Paper her “expert eye recognized that the wide spacing, spikey curves, idiosyncratic decorative strokes, and a dozen other characteristic markers” of Adam Pynkhurst’s confirmation “matched perfectly the hand of the Ellesmere scribe” (see [Chapter 2](#) for a reproduction). “After taking some notes and requesting a photograph, Mooney started to walk back to Mercers’ Hall when corroborating evidence suddenly popped into her head. ‘About halfway back,’ Mooney recalls, ‘I stopped still in the middle of a busy intersection as the penny dropped – as the British say – and I said aloud, ‘Oh, his name is Adam!’”¹

Serendipity had entered the picture, in the form of “Chauciers wordes. a Geffrey vn to Adame his owen scryveyne,” inscribed near the end of John Shirley’s collection of Chaucerian and Lydgatean verse, Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.20, p. 367:²

Adam scryveyne / if euer it þee byfalle
Boece or Troylus / for to wryten nuwe
Vnder þy long lokkes / þowe most haue þe scalle
But after my makynge þowe wryte more truwe
So oft adaye I mot þy werk renuwe
It to corect and eke to rubbe and scrape
And al is thorough þy necglygence and rape

This is the key to the Pynkhurst phenomenon: “*Adam scrivener*, if it ever befalls you to write *Boece* or *Troilus* anew, may you have ringworm under

your long locks unless you write more truly after my making, so often a-day I must renew your work, to correct it and also to rub and scrape, and all is through your negligence and haste.” Mooney had not just identified “the previously anonymous scribe who prepared the two most important manuscripts of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*”: for Adam Pynkhurst’s given name forged a connection between the Hg-El scribe “and the scribe named Adam who was evidently working for Chaucer when, or shortly after, he wrote *Boece* and *Troilus and Criseyde*.”³

The evidence to which Mooney alludes is to be found in the lyric recorded by Shirley rather than in any historical records. But since these lines neither mention Adam Pynkhurst nor demand a historical interpretation, Mooney’s case that she has identified Chaucer’s personal scribe is better understood as a mutually reinforcing set of claims: the discovery that Adam Pynkhurst was the scribe of Hengwrt and Ellesmere shows that we ought to read “Adam Scryveyne” as a reliable historical document; the reliable historicity of “Adam Scryveyne” shows that we ought to identify Pynkhurst as the scribe of these *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts. We certainly should not take a library newsletter’s account of the discovery of Chaucer’s personal scribe to be historically reliable in every detail, but its structure does accord with that presented in Mooney’s 2006 *Speculum* essay, which proceeds from its announcement regarding the respective hands to the lyric: “That Pinkhurst, scribe of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*, has the given name Adam means that he was very probably the ‘Adam scriveyn’ whom Chaucer chastises (probably humorously) for his ‘necglygence and rape’ in his single-stanza poem, ‘Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn.’”⁴

Yet that essay makes clear that Mooney’s discoveries were not serendipitous but planned. “I wish especially to thank Jane Roberts, who first drew my attention to the Mercers’ petition and its hand, and who has continued to assist with helpful readings, suggestions, revisions, and corrections of several drafts of this article,” reads the first of Mooney’s acknowledgments to a fellow scholar, the consequences of which become clear in the final sentence of note 38: “The likelihood that the hand of the Mercers’ petition is that of the Hengwrt / Ellesmere scribe led to my examination of other London documents discussed in this paper.”⁵ The reference is to the Petition of the Folk of Mercerye (Kew, National Archives SC 8/20/997), which Roberts, remembering its appearance in Chambers and Daunt’s *Book of London English*, thought might be appropriate for inclusion in her *Guide to Scripts Used in English Writings up to 1500*, as she recounted in her

2011 essay responding to the growing list of attributions to Pynkhurst.⁶ Her visit to the National Archives revealed it to be written by “a hand spot-on for comparison with the scribe of the Ellesmere manuscript.” Roberts did not pursue the issue, but “did, however, happen to show a xerox of it to Jeremy Smith, who mentioned it to Linne Mooney, who got in touch with [her] and began searching for documents in similar handwriting in the National Archives, the Guildhall, and the Mercers’ Hall,” as Mooney’s note indicates as well.

Mooney, unlike Roberts, took the Mercers’ petition to be in Scribe B’s own hand, which, given its dating to ca. 1387/88, suddenly unearthed the possibility, perhaps even likelihood, that this scribe worked directly with Chaucer. There had never been any indication of his activities this early. Any scholar of Middle English manuscripts hot on the trail of a confirmed Chaucerian scribe, one working in London by the late 1380s, would wonder whether he was called Adam. Of the identified candidates as the lyric’s addressee, only “Adam Pinckhurst,” first proposed by Bernard Wagner as part of an ongoing discussion in the 1929 *TLS*, had left behind an autograph (though Wagner did not know as much), in the Scriveners Company Common Paper.⁷ Upon finding certain features of the Hg-El scribe’s hand in Pynkhurst’s confirmation Mooney felt she had discovered the real “Adam scryveyne,” the man heretofore lost to history who had beckoned her to the Guildhall in the first place.

To be more precise, it was not so much the real Adam as the assumption that there was a real Adam, a scribe of that name who worked closely with Chaucer, that led Mooney to the Mercers’ Hall and the Guildhall. The first part of this chapter surveys the wide range of approaches “Adam Scryveyne” invites, ground well covered especially by Alexandra Gillespie, who makes the identical point from a much different perspective in her important essay “Reading Chaucer’s Words to Adam.” Yet no one has followed this logic to its conclusion. Even if it is granted that Scribe B (i.e., the Hg-El scribe) indeed was Adam Pynkhurst, the many possible interpretations and referents of “Adam Scryveyne” do away with any argument that he was Chaucer’s own scribe. The most that would have been discovered is B’s identity. The following two chapters will argue that Scribe B was not Pynkhurst, but the paleographical and linguistic attribution of Hengwrt and Ellesmere to him would not be up for debate were it not for the history that this chapter recounts. If “Chaucer’s words” can be taken in so many ways, “possibly not Chaucer’s words” only expands the interpretive landscape.

Who Was Adam Scrivener?

No records pertaining to Chaucer or to any scribe named Adam provide evidence as to the referent of Shirley's title and this lyric. Only two fourteenth-century London or Southwark scribes associated with Chaucer's works have been uncovered, both with connections to the *Troilus*, like this Adam, but both instead named Thomas.⁸ As for the name "Adam," it lends itself very well to generic or figural responses, as in "I don't know him from Adam," or the lyric R. E. Kaske connects with this clerk, "Arbore sub quadam dictavit clericus Adam, / Quomodo primus Adam peccavit in arbore quadam" ("Beneath a certain tree, Adam the clerk wrote of how the first Adam sinned by means of a certain tree").⁹ Dante's portrait of the falsifiers of *Inferno* 29 and 30, too, includes an "Adam," a counterfeiter like this one, who is similarly infected by the *scalfe*, a scabby disease of the skin.¹⁰

But still, that title: "Chauciers wordes. a Geffrey vn to Adame his owen scryveyne." Perhaps Shirley was right, either by knowledge or accident, and the effort of finding out is worthwhile and even imperative. The results of the archival sleuthing based on that conviction, though, have been mixed. The most likely candidates are Adam Leycestre, parchmener of London;¹¹ the legal scribe Adam Stedeman, who, having been "employed by a London goldsmith, John Walshe, to write his will ... slipped in a clause appointing himself executor," meaning that both he and the referent of this lyric were "guilty of falsifying the intent of the men for whom they were writing";¹² and of course "Adam Pinckhurst," member of the Scriveners Company (see [note 7](#)). A longer list of candidates might include the "Adam Chaucer" who held the lease of a tenement in Smithfield up to 1374, which "may to some extent explain the familiar strength of the curse,"¹³ and "Adam Acton, who is mentioned in the manuscript records of the Collegiate Church of St. George at Windsor, c. 1379–85. But he was apparently not a scrivener but a limner."¹⁴

It is also possible that the lyric's addressee is exactly what the poem says. "When Chaucer calls his scrivener 'Adam scryveyne'," wrote Ramona Bressie, "he undoubtedly uses a real name, for he habitually addresses his contemporaries by their real names – Strode and Gower, Bukton, Scogan, and Vache"; we now know that even Harry Bailey was real.¹⁵ The name "Pynkhurst" is much more colorful than these, which, one imagines, any poet fond of the mystery of names would have enjoyed exploiting. Mooney suggests that the name is absent because Chaucer's use of verse "might not allow a full reference to him as 'the scrivener Adam Pinkhurst'."¹⁶ Yet if he wanted readers

to understand the reference, he would have needed to ensure they would not opt only for the more obvious generic or figural response to the name “Adam.” In publicizing the possibility I here revive, Edith Rickert pointed out over a century ago that among the executors of Vache’s will was “John Skrevan”: “As this name with its variants, *Scriveyn(e)*, *Skryveyne(e)*, *Scryvan*, etc., is not uncommon, Professor Manly suggests that ‘Adam Scriveyn’ may possibly have been the actual name of Chaucer’s scribe.”¹⁷ The historical records do not abound in “Adam Scryveyne,” but are well populated with “Adam Scriptor,” including one who held a shop in Thames Street, London, in 1331.¹⁸

So far as I am aware, no one has since endorsed this possibility, which was laid to rest by Aage Brusendorff’s judgment that the identification of the addressee as “Adam Scryveyne” “is very unlikely in view of Shirley’s heading.”¹⁹ As for that heading, Brusendorff himself does not attribute it to Chaucer, instead calling the poem “Envoy to Adam,”²⁰ implying that the heading responds not to the poem itself but to some external historical truth, in the manner of Shirley’s explanation that the Complaints of Mars and Venus concern a scandal involving “my lady of York doughter to the kyng of Spaygne and my lord of Huntynghdon some tyme duc of Excestre.”²¹ But “Chauciers wordes ...” is much more akin to “Shirley’s characteristically ‘gossipy’ headnotes” as found throughout Trinity R.3.20, to which Gillespie draws attention: Lydgate wrote one poem “by night as he lay in his bedde at Londoun” (p. 53), while a medical recipe was “proved by þe nobul duc of lancastre Johan for þe maladye of þe stone” (p. 373).²² Everything in the heading could be explained quite easily as a response to the text itself.²³ Moreover, Graham Pollard finds no uses of the term *scrivener* in London documents to describe an individual’s occupation before 1393 (I have spotted one from 1389, however: see [note 20](#)), and comments that “this subdivision of the scrivener’s craft was not widely used in common speech.”²⁴ It would have been quite unusual, then, for Chaucer to use it thus at all, and especially in the mid-1380s when Mooney dates the poem.²⁵ I see no grounds for dismissing a man with the name Adam Scrivener from the list of candidates as this lyric’s referent.

Mooney very briefly lists possible “reasons for not accepting the identifications given here,” that is, of Pynkhurst as both the Hg-El scribe and addressee of this stanza. The first she allows is the rejection of her paleographical argument, which I will address in [Chapter 2](#), while the other is an approach to “Adam Scryveyne” unlike any canvassed in the previous paragraphs: the assumption “that Chaucer could have had one scribe

named Adam working for him in the 1380s or 1390s, copying *Boece* and *Troilus*, whereas another scribe named Adam Pinkhurst copied Hengwrt and Ellesmere and the other literary manuscripts attributed to that hand.”²⁶ Such an interpretation, Mooney grants, “remains a theoretical possibility, but the relative uncommonness of the name ‘Adam’ makes it the less likely view of the available evidence.” The existence of four other viable scribal “Adams” suggests otherwise, as does the fact that by the thirteenth century, as the *OED* says, “*Adam* had become one of the commonest personal names in England, and has since remained part of the common stock of male forenames.”²⁷

On the one hand, then, line 1 of “Adam Scryveyne” invites an abundance of fruitful approaches; on the other, Mooney’s claim to have identified the referent of that lyric necessitates the veracity of one of them alone, despite the absence of any evidence for it or against the others. In place of evidence is circular assertion: “Knowledge that this was in fact the name of a scribe employed by Chaucer puts to rest arguments as to the primarily figural interpretation of Adam’s name in this poem.”²⁸ Whence such “knowledge”? The logic has it that, because we know the lyric to be historical, it cannot be figural, and is therefore historical. Yet if such “knowledge” existed apart from the poem itself, then readers could interpret “Adam Scryveyne” however they liked with no bearing on the issue. Only because it does not exist does any struggle over the interpretation of the first of these seven lines arise. This struggle is also one-sided, since the figural approach rejected by Mooney has no problem with the historical approach. Between the possibilities “that Chaucer is addressing an unidentified scribe or perhaps scribes at large, and using ‘Adam’ as a generic name” on the one hand and on “the other that he actually had a scribe named Adam and is capitalizing on the happy correspondence between his name and that of *clericus Adam*,” Kaske “strongly prefer[s] the latter,” in large part “because it produces still another example of Chaucer’s comic tension between the actual and the typical or even symbolic, seen at its finest in the portraits of the General Prologue.”²⁹ This nicely Chaucerian moment is what must be sacrificed by the belief that “Adam Scryveyne” refers to Adam Pynkhurst exclusively. The sacrifice is necessary, for otherwise the possibilities remain open that the surname of “Adam scryveyne” might well have been Acton, Scryveyne, Chaucer, Scriptor, Stedeman, or Leycestre, and that the given name might generically connote a helpless scribe or invoke the first man, an unidentified man, “Chaucer’s own scrivener,” a combination of some of these, or none of them.

Chaucer's Words?

Let us leave behind the addressee of the stanza and turn to the other side of the question: might Shirley have known that these were in fact "Chaucer's words"? According to Brusendorff, "it must not be forgotten that though Shirley hardly knew Chaucer personally – as proved by the absence of intimate touches in his notes on the poet's work – he must have been in touch with the Chaucer family through Lydgate, a fact which gives his information about the poet a special value."³⁰ But Brusendorff also wrote that "there cannot be much doubt that we shall have to uphold the authenticity of the present poem" – he is discussing "The Balade of the Reeve," nowhere mentioned in *The Riverside Chaucer* – "adding it to the Canon of Chaucer's Minor Poems," which we must do "almost solely on the strength of Shirley's MS. ascription."³¹ And even he acknowledges that Shirley committed a "single, though rather serious, offence" in attributing to Chaucer "The Chronicle of Nine Women."³²

Margaret Connolly, though, quite reasonably defends the general trustworthiness of Shirley's headers, and considers the question of where he might have received his information about the poet. The conventional answer has been that someone like Thomas or Alice Chaucer might have been the source, but Connolly suggests that "it is perhaps more likely, or at least *just as* likely, that Shirley might have known scribes who had worked for Chaucer, and that they might have shared copying materials with him." Mooney and Stubbs, she notes, place Pynkhurst in the Guildhall up to 1410 at least, which "raises the theoretical possibility that Shirley and Pynkhurst might have known each other in the first decade of the fifteenth century and perhaps for some years later (no evidence for the date of Pynkhurst's death has been uncovered). Pynkhurst could have been the supply route for Shirley's acquisition of any number of the Chaucerian poems that he copies."³³ Yet this logic, it seems to me, amounts to another circle: since "Adam Scryveyne" is about Pynkhurst, Pynkhurst might have provided information about Chaucer to Shirley, showing that "Adam Scryveyne" is about Pynkhurst. It also falters on the absence of any evidence that Pynkhurst, whether or not he was ever employed by Chaucer, was in the Guildhall at any stage of his career, notwithstanding Mooney and Stubbs's claim to the contrary (see [Chapter 5](#)).

One can speculate endlessly on the reliability or otherwise of Shirley's headers and information about Chaucer and his works in general. It will be more helpful to turn to the evidence concerning his reliability concerning *Boece* and *Troilus*, the two titles on which the authenticity of

“Adam Scryveyne” relies. In doing so we will find that it is here that Shirley shows greatest confusion, or at least sloppiness. The flyleaves of a copy of Hoccleve’s *Regiment of Princes*, San Marino, Huntington Library MS EL 26 A.13, fols. iiv–iiir, feature Shirley’s inscription of three stanzas in sequence. First is the “whetstone” stanza of *Troilus* (1.631–37) – attributed, though, to Gower.³⁴ Next comes the famous “If no love is o lord what fele I so” stanza (1.400–406), rightly labeled “Troyles.” Then, this:

Boece

As þat pouert causeþe soburnesse
 And feobulnesse / enforceþe continence
 Right so prosperite and sikurnesse /
 þe moder is of vyce / and negligeñce
 And ricchesse causeþe / also Insolence /
 And oft honour / it chaungeþe gode thewis
 þere is no more perayllous pestylence /
 þane hye estate graunted vn to shrewes.
 To yowe Chaucier /

That final phrase notwithstanding, this is not the *Boece* we know today, but rather a stanza from John Walton’s translation of the *Consolation of Philosophy* – a stanza itself that achieved rather wide independent circulation, once being attributed to “chauser geffrey,” and another time concluding “Quod Chaucer.”³⁵ Shirley’s “To yowe Chaucier” seems to be a reflex of this latter tradition. Another faulty attribution? Whatever the case, this flyleaf shows that none of the three poles of “Adam Scryveyne”’s attribution to Chaucer – its heading, *Troilus*, and *Boece* – is a stable category, especially so long as John Shirley is involved. The *Troilus* of “Adam Scryveyne” is certainly Chaucer’s, but the numbers of extant manuscripts do not support the assumption that the other work cited in those lines is his too. Such extracts “point up the paradox that the misattributions of Walton’s translation to Chaucer also unwittingly claim Chaucer as a translator of Boethius while actually demonstrating the much wider circulation of Walton’s own translation,” at twenty-three copies plus extracts, compared with nine manuscripts (one in Shirley’s hand) and a fragment of Chaucer’s prose *Boece*.³⁶

The assumption that this is Chaucer’s goes hand in hand with the assumptions that the lyric is his too and that its addressee must have been at work in the 1380s. Who else could have written it? “If someone else wrote it, they are doing so in the name of Chaucer,” writes Christopher de Hamel, assuming that the *Boece* must be his and taking the allegorical approach as the “only other possibility.”³⁷ And yet, as Daniel Wakelin has

written, "even if it is by Chaucer and about Pynkhurst, then this poem is inaccurate in its particulars and in general."³⁸ The lyric's speaker, after all, must correct, rub, and scrape the parchment on which Adam has made so many errors. In his study of correction in English manuscripts of this era, Wakelin focuses for the most part on scribes themselves, but that category is not operative here. The two candidates are thus either the author of *Boece* and *Troilus*, as assumed by de Hamel and everyone else, or the supervisor of the production of these manuscripts, neither category of which does Wakelin discuss at length. While he finds some evidence of correction of manuscripts in hands other than the main scribe's, "collaboration in correcting is not consistent enough to suggest an orderly system of subordinate scribes and supervisors."³⁹

Yet there is still less evidence of authorial than of supervisory "rubbing and scraping." "Since Chaucer took the time to read through and correct these copies," Mooney writes, "it seems likely that they were the first copies made from his drafts rather than later copies, which authors did not usually have an opportunity to read and correct."⁴⁰ To be sure, it is easy to imagine an author *correcting* early copies made from his drafts, but in such a circumstance, as Norman Blake remarks, "Chaucer would probably cross out the offending piece and add the new text above in the margin."⁴¹ Rubbing and scraping would be necessary only in the production of fair copies intended for circulation or presentation. Among authors, John Capgrave corrected his works via erasure, but as he was also his own scribe his case does not support the notion that authors habitually engaged in this sort of activity.⁴² The situation in "Adam Scryveyne" is the opposite: a speaker who rubs and scrapes, who corrects via erasure, another scribe's handiwork. A. S. G. Edwards asks, "Why would Chaucer, at the latest stage in production, be involved in the actual preparation of the final manuscript, doing tasks that fall within the purview of the skilled artisan?"⁴³ The only obvious rejoinder to Edwards's question would be that he is taking the lyric too literally. That objection has some force; but it would apply equally to too literal a reading of "Adam" in the first place, which would do away with the identification of Pynkhurst as the poem's referent – if it has one at all. The literal reading of the lyric is precisely what is here being tested.⁴⁴

The evidence manifest in the lyric itself rather than Shirley's title would thus seem to favor the point of view of a senior scribe, or "supervisor," rather than a poet. Many more copies of the two (actually, three) works called *Boece* and *Troilus*, and thus more supervisors, existed than authors of those works, of course – though perhaps Chaucer's status as a known practitioner of rime royal balances such considerations. Let us turn, then,

to the term that Shirley seems to have taken as a reference to authorial production in the threat “þowe most haue þe scalle / But after my *makyng* þowe wryte more truwe.” Chaucer’s famous envoy to *Troilus*, “But litel book, no makyng thow n’envie, / But subgit be to alle Poesye” (v.1789–90: “But little book, do not seek to rival any ‘making’: instead, be deferential to all poetry”), shows that this term could mean literary work.⁴⁵ Edwards observes that the term “had a wide range of other meanings,” among which is “‘a piece of writing’, of whatever kind,” though defenders of the usual interpretation might reply that in the supporting quotations these “pieces of writing” are often if not always “literary works”: this is where the *Middle English Dictionary* cites the lines from *Troilus* as referring to “a piece of writing; poetry.”⁴⁶

Yet Chaucer’s broader usage supports Edwards’s point. While David Burnley finds only “insecure evidence for setting up *makere* as a technical term,” he notes that

Chaucer’s use of the verbal noun *making* with literary reference on five out of its eight occurrences may save the day. The acid test is whether the word *make* alone, when no object like *song* or *book* is specified, can mean “to compose text.” Over eight hundred occurrences of the verb in Gower disclose just two examples of this sense. Chaucer’s score is less than ten from more than 1150 occurrences, mostly in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*.

Such rarity, Burnley concludes, means that “[t]he word *makere*, when used of a poet, is best regarded as a figurative usage representing a significant comment on the way in which such artists conceived of themselves as craftsmen.”⁴⁷ In sum, we can determine the denotation of *makyng* only if we already know whether the voice of “Adam Scryveyne” is that of the poet or rather of the book artisan. The term itself provides no evidence either way. Edwards goes on to cite “five words that appear nowhere else in the canon” – *scryveyne*, *scalle*, *renuwe*, *scrape*, *rape* – “and four that are used in senses that occur nowhere else in the canon”: *makyng* as discussed, *truwe* meaning “accurately,” *corect* meaning “remove errors,” and *rubbe* in the sense of “erase.” He argues: “Such a dense accumulation of unique occurrences in such a brief compass is without parallel in Chaucer’s canonical lexis; it seems potentially significant.”⁴⁸ It is difficult to gauge that significance, however: perhaps Chaucer used these terms only here simply because it is the only poem about a scrivener who doesn’t write more true and thus forces the author to rub and scrape. At its extreme, such logic can disattribute *Pearl* from the *Gawain*-poet.⁴⁹ Still, this body of data can be helpful if placed in a wider lexical context.

Take the case of *truwe*. This is the *Middle English Dictionary*'s only citation in support of the definition "accurately" (s.v. "treu(e)" (adv.), 3(c)), while the closest other definition, 3(b), "exactly, precisely; in accordance with a standard, correctly," is cited from a single fourteenth-century text, *The Equatorie of the Planetis*, which contrary to some earlier beliefs Chaucer certainly did not write: "lok thy croys be trewe proued by geometrical conclusioun."⁵⁰ The term has a technical force that applies better to a scribe copying the "making" of a supervisor than to the reproduction of an abstract concept such as an author's literary work. When Chaucer does want to denote "so as accurately to represent an original" – for this is not among the meanings found only in "Adam Scryveyne" – he and most of his peers used *trewely*, as in "He was also a lerned man, a clerk, / That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche" (*GP* 480–81; this is *MED*, s.v. "treuli" (adv.), 9(b)). The *MED*'s only other citation of the adverb used to modify *write* is in Lydgate's *Troy Book*, where the verb means "compose" rather than "copy."⁵¹ Chaucer employs this term in all its connotations just under thirty times in *Troilus*. There can be no attributing the unique adverbial form of *truwe* to scribal error, since it must rhyme with *nuwe* and *renuwe*. In sum, everything about the usage of *truwe*, save the rhyme, would be very unusual for Chaucer.

The attribution of "Adam Scryveyne" to Geoffrey Chaucer raises other substantial linguistic difficulties as well. Lines 2–4, especially, present problems of word form and meter that either place this among the most heavily, and ironically, corrupt stanzas in the Chaucerian corpus or exclude it from that corpus.

Adam scryveyne / if euer it pee byfalle (line 1)

This line presents no problems so long as the second term is pronounced as "scryveyne" (its final *-e* elides with the initial vowel of *if*), and possibly the first as "Adam." If that term is rather "Adam," though, there is still no problem, for as Stephen Barney, editor of the *Troilus* for *The Riverside Chaucer*, remarks, the inverted first foot is "always recognized as a permitted variation in the iambic line."⁵² The final syllable in this line, an extra-metrical schwa, is very common in Chaucerian verse. The only slight oddity is that, as Barney explains, "certain polysyllabic words in certain contexts can have a reduced syllable count with a presumed slurring, especially words with *er*," like *euer* in this line.⁵³ I emphasize all this so as to indicate my acceptance of Barney's argument that "Chaucer in *Troilus* uses, with a tolerable, expedient, and comprehensible set of variations, the meter traditionally called iambic pentameter," which, "with its recognized

variation,” would be “incredible to deny” the poem.⁵⁴ The following three lines, though, show that the poet or scribe(s) of “Adam Scryveyne” did not recognize as much, or at least did not know how he constructed such lines, despite producing a stanza of them himself.

Boece or Troylus / for to wryten nuwe (line 2)

If this line is authorial, Chaucer did not write the lyric. It can certainly be scanned as a standard iambic-pentametrical line: “Boéce or Tróylus / fòr to wrytén núwe,” the grave accent on *fòr* indicating that the syllable “can conform to iambic meter even though it is of ambiguous stress.”⁵⁵ But in lines where the name is followed by *to* + infinitive, the protagonist’s name scans with three syllables, “Tró-ĩ-lús”:

The dóu/ble sór/we of Tró/ilús / to téll/en (1.1; elision at *-we of*)

Tho gán / the véyn/e of Tró/ilús / to bléd/e (1.866; elision at *-e of*)

Ne mýght/e han cóm/en Tró/ilús / to sé (v.282; elision at *-e han*)

And ìn / this wó / gan Tró/ilús / to dwéll/e (v.1566)

The sole exception, only a few lines after the second instance here, enables a comic parallelism with its rhyming partner:

And with that word he gan hym for to shake,
And seyde, “Thef, thow shalt hyre name telle.”
But thó / gan sé/ly Trói/lus fòr / to quáke ... (1.869–71)⁵⁶

It is very difficult to imagine Chaucer diverging from his standard usage here by adding unnecessary filler, and very easy to imagine an author or later scribe adding *fòr* reflexively, perhaps not recognizing the term *Troilus*’s variability. To my knowledge, Skeat is the only editor to have omitted *fòr*, a lead that, if they accept “Adam Scryveyne” as Chaucer’s, all editors should follow.⁵⁷

Vnder þy long lokkes / þowe most haue þe scalle (line 3)

A recent discussion of Middle English textual criticism scolds the *Riverside Chaucer* editors because they “have not modified the phrase *thy long lokkes* to *thy longe lokkes*, which would have marked plurality in the adjective in accordance with established Chaucerian grammar and removed what Chaucer’s contemporary London circle would have considered, if reflected in pronunciation, a prosodic irregularity associated with either the vulgar or with Northern incomers.”⁵⁸ So far as it goes this criticism is perfectly valid; yet a far greater problem is that such an emendation results in a hexameter: “Únder / þy lóng/[e] lók/kes þówe / most háue / þe scáll/e”

(final *-e* on *þowe* not pronounced; Hg-El's spelling is *thow*). The only conceivable alternative, if the line must stand as is, would have it opening with three offbeats, "Vnder thy," but such is *not* recognized as a permitted variation, and so far as I know never occurs in *Troilus*. This led the nineteenth-century editors John Koch and Walter Skeat to omit *long*.⁵⁹ The emendation comes at a cost, though, since the phrase *long[e] lokkes* is certainly one of the lyric's most Chaucerian touches. The portraits of such figures as the Squire and Absolon in *The Canterbury Tales* emphasize their luxuriant, long hair, the context in which Britt Mize places Adam the scrivener.⁶⁰

Line 3's other problems inhere in the phrase *þowe most*. Under its entry *moten* (v.2), the *Middle English Dictionary* cites Chaucerian uses of this term spelled thus under nearly every meaning: "be allowed" in the past tense, with past or future meaning (1a, 6a), "must" (2a, 2b), "insist on" (3), "must go" (5b), "ought" or "should" (7a), "be able" or "might" (7b), and so forth.⁶¹ Yet, leaving aside "Adam Scryveyne" itself, all seventeen citations of Chaucer in the relevant definitions, 11 ("in selected oaths and asseverations") and 12 ("in selected blessings and curses"), representing a range of works and manuscripts, instead spell the term without the *s*, and moreover always place it before rather than after the addressee, as in, "So longe **mote** **3e** lyue, and alle proude, / Tyl crowes feet be growe vnder youre eighe" (*Troilus* 11.402–403); "Now longe **moote** **thou** saille by the cost, / Sire gentil maister, gentil maryneer!" (*ShipT* 436–37), "Fy, stynkyng swyn! Fy, foule **moote** **thee** falle!" (*MancPro* 40).⁶²

But after my makyng þowe wryte more truwe (line 4)

This line is a metrical mess. When read naturally today, it comes across as an iamb followed by three triplets or anapests (But áff/ter my mák/ying þowe wrýt/e more trúw/e), which, if accurate, would indicate its unChaucerian character. Things can be salvaged if *my* and *-kyng* bear metrical stress, but the shifted stress on "*makyng*" is difficult to accept, as such wrenching usually occurs only at line end, where it is common, as in *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* 922, final two iambs "the fír / máking."⁶³ The word *wryte* in the phrase at line ending, *wryte more truwe*, must be disyllabic on account of its subjunctive mood, which is manifested by the *-e*.⁶⁴ As a result the final foot is an anapest (–ě möre trúw–; *more* can be either mono- or disyllabic in *Troilus*) and thus very unlikely to be Chaucer's.⁶⁵ The simplest fix is to omit *more*, as did Koch and Skeat, the latter taking the phrase to mean "unless thou write exactly in accordance with my composition."⁶⁶ But as we have seen, the *MED* cites only one fourteenth-century work, a scientific treatise, with this meaning of *truwe*. This is thus either one of its first uses, perhaps

the very first, as applied to the labor of copying, or a production of some forty-odd years later, when “Boece” was more likely to mean Walton than Chaucer.

So offt adaye I mot þy werk renuwe
It to corect and eke to rubbe and scrape (lines 5–6)

Line 5’s only linguistic problem for those who would attribute the lyric to Chaucer is *renuwe*’s presence on Edwards’s list of terms Chaucer does not use elsewhere. But line 6 introduces very unusual syntactical problems. The general parallelism is clear enough: *It* refers to *þy werk*, *corect* and *rubbe and scrape* are the means of renewal. But line 5 is structured as a modal auxiliary phrase, “I must renew,” while line 6 presents two infinitives, which cannot follow the modal auxiliary *moten* (“I must to correct it”). The syntax could perhaps suggest an assumed “(In order) to correct it,” except that one corrects so as to renew, not the other way around.⁶⁷ Chaucer is master of syntactical parallelism, the poet who brilliantly balanced those main and subordinate verbal clauses in the opening sentence of the *General Prologue*. If the exception in “Adam Scryveyne” had a particular and striking poetic effect, or if it occurred elsewhere in his poetry, perhaps this would seem right; but it just comes across as poor syntax. Chaucer would easily have maintained an elegant parallelism here, in a line avoiding the paltry opening foot “it to.” (“Correct it thus, and eek it rubbe and scrape”?)

And al is thorough þy necglygence and rape (line 7)

Both John Koch, writing over a century ago, and the modern linguists who criticize the *Riverside* printing of this poem call into question the spelling *thorough*, suggesting that *thurgh* is more authentically Chaucerian and perhaps even “required by the metre.”⁶⁸ Yet the scribe of Corpus 61 of the *Troilus*, who spells “so consistently to reveal grammar and meter,” says Barney, uses *thorough*, and always as a single syllable: “Thorough wikked tonges, be it he or she” (1.39), “And thorough the feld, in everi wightes eere” (11.195), etc.⁶⁹ M. L. Samuels observes that Corpus 61 “contains a thin sprinkling” of forms recording an earlier stage of London English, that is, of “Type II” spellings, to be discussed in [Chapter 3](#). But he concludes that this manuscript’s “claim to represent Chaucer’s language is poorer than that of Hengwrt-Ellesmere” – on the basis, though, precisely of this spelling *thorough*, which he, too, assumes must be disyllabic.⁷⁰ Two alternatives, then: either the Corpus scribe was attentive to the meter of *Troilus* and had access to early spellings, supporting this spelling

thorough; or the disyllabic nature of this spelling undermines such a conclusion and shows it to be inauthentic in "Adam scryveyne." Readers can decide for themselves. In any case if the latter is to be preferred the spelling is very easily fixed and has no bearing on the attribution or otherwise of the lyric. This line, perhaps alone of the seven, hits the mark and lives up to Chaucerian standards even if it contains his only use of the term *rape* (*MED*, s.v. "rape" (n.(1)), "haste").

None of this proves that Chaucer could not have written this lyric. Many of these problems – addition of extraneous *for* and *long*, inversion and alteration of *moote thou*, and the like – are easily attributable to scribal corruption. "Such frequent and arbitrary changes disfigure practically all Shirley's volumes and make his evidence as to the textual tradition of the Chaucerian Minor Poems absolutely unreliable," in Brusendorff's judgment.⁷¹ Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards observe the oddity that on the one hand the case for his reliability as to attribution "must rest on the assumption that Shirley had some privileged access to information about Chaucer's texts" (he knew the Chaucer family through Lydgate) but that on the other "such authority has not usually been extended to the texts themselves" (he was an old, bad copyist). "There is," they conclude with considerable understatement, "only limited support for such a view."⁷² Even if that operating assumption explains some of the problems in "Adam Scryveyne," the others, especially lines 4 and 6, are more difficult to account for thus. They, together with Blake's and Edwards's observations that the premise does not support the assumption that this is a poet's voice, do not well fit the theory of Chaucerian authorship.

At the least, advocates of Chaucerian authorship might profitably rethink their willingness to cite and teach "Adam Scryveyne" as presented by Shirley, Pace and David, and *The Riverside*: Skeat's and Koch's antique editions are by far the most authentically Chaucerian in both meter and spelling. The willingness of modern critics and teachers to present manifestly unChaucerian verse and spelling as if they reflected his words would itself make for a productive topic for discussion in the classroom, and it is one to which [Chapter 3](#) will return in the context of Adam Pynkhurst's copying of *Piers Plowman* in a London dialect. The strongest case for Chaucer's authorship now inheres in the independent proposition that Adam Pynkhurst copied Hengwrt and Ellesmere. Two Adams, or one? But that proposition would never have arisen if not for the assumption that "Adam Scryveyne" referred to a historical personage employed by Chaucer and active in the 1380s.

Chaucer's Scribe?

Few of the individual points I expound above are surprising or new. Before "Chaucer's Scribe" had even appeared, Brendan O'Connell raised doubts about the role of "Adam Scryveyne" in Mooney's 2004 lecture, citing Shirley's responsibility for the title, the existence of other Adams who could have been the lyric's addressee, and the presumptuousness of assuming "that Adam worked as Chaucer's personal scribe for many years before working on Ellesmere / Hengwrt. There is no evidence other than the phrase 'his owne scriveyn' in the title of *Adam* that Chaucer employed a personal scribe, as Gower appears to have done."⁷³ Yet no footnote to an essay written before the evidence was published could expect to have much impact, and so far as I am aware only Edwards and Roberts have followed up, if very briefly, on my theme here: that there is neither solid evidence for, nor good reason to accept, the idea that Pynkhurst, whether or not he copied Hengwrt and Ellesmere, is the referent of "Adam Scryveyne" or was employed by the poet.⁷⁴ Otherwise even the most strongly stated arguments against Mooney's approach, such as Gillespie's promotion of "other ways of reading the poem Chaucer wrote about a scribe called Adam," end up deeming her reading of the poem "very persuasive" and "entirely likely."⁷⁵

Yet the belief that "Chaucer's own scribe" has been unmasked relies entirely on the validity of a particular, historical approach to "Adam Scryveyne." If that approach is invalid, the most that has been discovered is the name of the Hg-El scribe. Despite the problems already raised by O'Connell, the link between these two Adams, the referent of the lyric and the scrivener Pynkhurst, has seemed "a far more enticing proposition," in Roberts's words.⁷⁶ I can attest to the excitement of being a professional Chaucerian in an era in which his personal scribe joins the field.⁷⁷ As for Chaucer's authorship of the lyric, "No one has doubted" it, says the *Riverside* (published 1987).⁷⁸ I also wonder whether the acquiescence to Mooney's argument despite the problems raised here stems from a deep-seated recognition that in rejecting it we might be rejecting history's sense of what Chaucer means. For "Adam Scryveyne" concludes all editions of Chaucer's *Works* from John Stow's of 1561 to John Urry's of 1721, as Megan Cook has pointed out, a location that ensured its status as the "last word" now more commonly assigned to the *Retractions*, with which the *Canterbury Tales* concludes, in which the poet surveys his career: "when Sir Phillip Sidney wrote in the *Defense of Poesy* that 'of Chaucer, truly, I know not whether to marvel more that he in his misty time could see

so clearly, or that we in this clear age walk so stumbly after him,' it was *Adam Scryveyn* and not the *Retraction* that he and his contemporaries trailed behind."⁷⁹ We join Sidney as heirs of a long tradition of editing, reading, and creating Chaucer in terms established in large part by this lyric, a tradition that perhaps reaches its apogee with "Chaucer's Scribe."

One still wonders whether the excitement surrounding Mooney's announcement would have been mitigated by recognition that the coincidence of names between "Adam Scryveyn" and Adam Pynkhurst caused, rather than grew from, her quest. It might be helpful, then, to imagine where we would be if Adam Pynkhurst's given name had been, say, "John," and his confirmation had still somehow come to the attention of Middle English paleographers. Would they have announced the discovery of Scribe B's identity, and the rest of us celebrated, even if not with quite the enthusiasm with which we have reacted when that identity made him the man Chaucer employed to copy the *Troilus* and *Canterbury Tales* as well? The question is not purely hypothetical. For over a century scholars have been able to compare Hg and El with a Middle English/Latin manuscript, both of whose scripts, Bastard Anglicana and Anglicana Formata, are perfect matches with Adam Pynkhurst's, and with the same combination of a dozen decorative features as his confirmation's. Only in 2004, the year with which this chapter began, was it suggested that this long-celebrated manuscript was in fact by the Hengwrt-Ellesmere scribe, in a major essay by Simon Horobin and Linne Mooney. When the latter looked at the Mercers' account book and Adam Pynkhurst's confirmation, it was not the hands of the *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts that were foremost in her mind, but rather this other production, in the hand of the one who within an hour or so, when she indeed found further specimens in the Scriveners Company Common Paper, would become Adam Scryveyn, "Chaucer's scribe."

The Pynkhurst Canon

Adam Pynkhurst's confirmation in the Scriveners Company Common Paper, ca. 1395, is by now instantly recognizable to just about any scholar of Chaucer's works, thanks to its starring role in Linne Mooney's blockbuster essay "Chaucer's Scribe" (see [Figure 1](#)). Richard Firth Green has now explained the context of this document, which is not what we have assumed or indeed what the Common Paper wants its audience to think. In the early 1390s, Bishop Braybrooke had "sent a pastoral letter ... to the priests of his diocese exhorting them to admonish those of their parishioners who continued to practise their trades on Sundays and religious festivals and to threaten them with legal action if they did not desist," singling out for particular attention the scriveners; this is transcribed into the Common Paper on page 5.¹ When one of their members staged a rebellion a few years later, it was time for action so as to confirm to Braybrooke the Company's discipline: all members had to touch the gospels and swear to uphold the integrity of the Company and to adhere to all present and future ordinances. What Pynkhurst and his peers inscribed were thus "confirmations" of these oaths, recorded ca. 1395 rather than 1392 as scholars had earlier assumed. Pynkhurst's is the most elaborate, decorations and flourishes of all sorts adorning both his name on the left and the top line's "Et ego Adam Pynkhurst."

This is a fascinating document and, together with its companions in the book, no doubt has much to teach students of late fourteenth-century guild culture, London life, and the world of the scriveners. But its pertinence to such topics does not account for the fact that all Chaucerians now know about Pynkhurst's confirmation. Its fame is owing instead to its author's identification as the scribe of four literary items that A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes assigned to "Scribe B" of one of those items (I provide sigils for those discussed in detail; others will be covered in subsequent chapters):

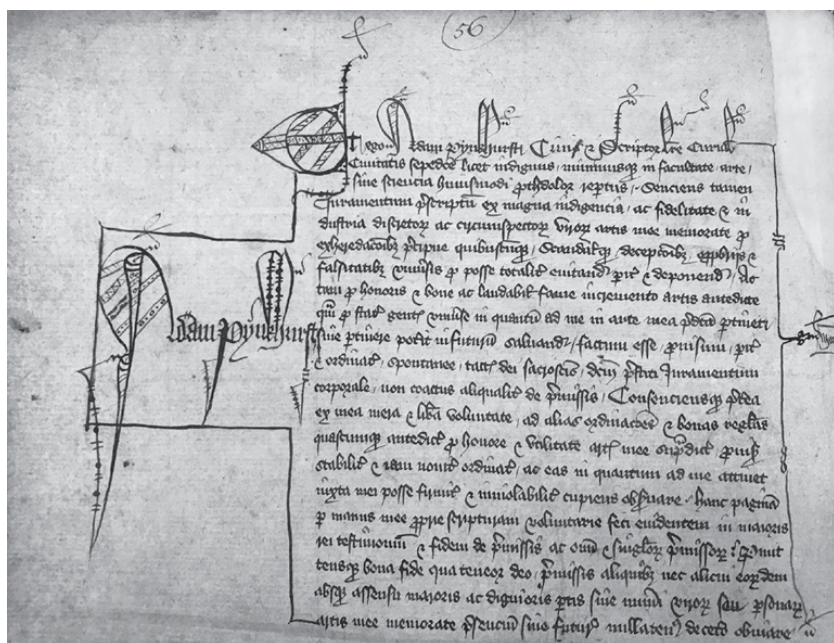


Figure 1 Scriveners Company Common Paper, Adam Pynkhurst's confirmation.
 London Metropolitan Archives, City of London: CLC/L/SC/A/005/MS05370, p. 56.
 Reproduced by the kind permission of the Scriveners' Company.

El: San Marino, Huntington Library MS EL 26 C.9: Ellesmere

Hg: Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS Peniarth 392D: Hengwrt

Tr: Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.2 (581), fols. 9r–32v, the stint of
 “Scribe B”: *Confessio Amantis*

Hatfield House, Herts., Cecil Papers, Box S/I: “Cecil” or “Hatfield”
 fragment of *Troilus*²

Between 1979 and 2004 four other items were ascribed, with various levels of confidence, to B:

Cambridge University Library MS Kk.1.3, part 20: fragment of
*Canterbury Tales*³

W: Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.17 (353): *Piers Plowman*
 B, Rolle's *Form of Living*, anonymous poem on Christ's love⁴

New Haven, Beinecke Library MS Osborn fa.45: the Holloway fragment
 of *Piers Plowman C*⁵

Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Hatton 4: an hours and psalter written in a liturgical Textura⁶

And since 2006 these have been assigned to “Adam Pynkhurst” on the assumption that he was Scribe B:

Hn: Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS Peniarth 393D: fragment of *Boece*⁷

Dublin, Trinity College MS 244: prose tracts, some of which are Wycliffite⁸
Kew, National Archives, C 81/1394/87: petition on Chaucer’s behalf, 1385⁹
Kew, National Archives, SC 8/20/997: petition of the Folk of Mercerye accusing Brembre of treason, ca. 1387/88¹⁰

Kew, National Archives, SC 8/21/1001B: petition of the Leathersellers’ and White Tawiers’ companies accusing Brembre of treason, ca. 1387/88¹¹

N: London, BL Additional Charter 40542, a deed recording the transfer of property back to John of Northampton after his return from exile, 1393¹²

London, BL Additional MS 35287: extensive correction to MS M of *Piers Plowman* B, main text in another hand¹³

O: London, Mercers’ Company, Wardens’ Account Book, 1344, 1347 to 1464, fols. 6r–10v: records John Organ’s receipts and expenditure for the years 1391–92¹⁴

P: London Metropolitan Archives, City of London (hereafter LMA), CLC/L/SC/A/005/MS05370, p. 56: Pynkhurst’s confirmation in the Scriveners Company Common Paper¹⁵

LMA, COL/AD/01/009, entries on fols. 36r, 62v, 87r, 98r: Letter Book I, 1406–10¹⁶

The length and diversity of this list signal the difficulty of any attempt to catalogue all known items in Scribe B’s hand, even if the Pynkhurst attribution were not in play. This chapter comes at that problem from the other end. Chapter 1 considered that part of the process whereby Pynkhurst took on his identity as Scribe B via a particular approach to “Adam Scryveyne”; this chapter considers the second half of the process, the paleographical argument, in which the hand of P, Pynkhurst’s confirmation, came to be “unmistakably” that found in Hg and El in part via such sheer force of rhetoric,¹⁷ and more important, via the setting aside of the usual methodology of scribal attribution in favor of an appeal to supposed “signatures” or “marks” in the form of decorative features. I will here freshly reconstruct the Pynkhurst canon, from the ground up, first by comparing the aspect and duct of his scripts to those of the other potential members, and then by identifying the idiosyncrasies in the formation of individual letters and of other distinctive habits that enable confident attributions. The most consequential result will be my

conclusion that Adam Pynkhurst was not Scribe B, though the similarities that led to their combination do render quite plausible the possibilities that they knew each other or that Pynkhurst was B's mentor.

Slashes, Dots, and Knots

Scribal identifications conventionally begin with an analysis of "the style, proportions, aspect and duct of the handwriting."¹⁸ Aspect is "the general impression on the page made by a specimen of handwriting at first sight," or "a unique ensemble of common elements which is only recognized after some (though not necessarily a long) extent of acquaintance, in comparison with others of the same genetic group."¹⁹ Doyle and Parkes's overview of the hands at work in Tr indicates the sorts of characteristics pertaining to aspect: "Scribe A wrote a bold, fluent hand," the comparison of which to the others in the manuscript (which are thus of the same genetic group) "suggests that he may well have been the youngest member of the team ... The most distinctive qualities of this hand lie in its size, its vigorous duct and its lateral spread"; those of B's, "in its size, and its agile duct with a vertical impetus which leads to irregularities in the height and slope of the letters"; and so forth.²⁰ This might appear a subjective criterion, and indeed it is: hence the necessity of the second crucial characteristic, mentioned in both of these descriptions of A's and B's aspects, *duct*, "the distinctive manner in which strokes are traced upon the writing surface: it represents the combination of such factors as the angle at which the pen was held in relation to the way in which it was cut, the degree of pressure applied to it, and the direction in which it was moved."²¹ "Aspect and duct," Doyle and Parkes explain, "do not form sufficient criteria to identify the manuscripts as the work of a single scribe. However, once we suspect that we recognize the handwriting of a scribe in another manuscript, further detailed analysis may reveal idiosyncrasies in the formation of individual letters and the presence of other distinctive habits which would enable us to establish that the same scribe was responsible for the different manuscripts."²²

The proposal that Adam Pynkhurst is the scribe of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere *Canterbury Tales*, though, did not proceed via identification of identical style, proportions, aspects, and ducts between the former's confirmation and the hand of the latter manuscripts. Pynkhurst's hand "is unmistakably" Scribe B's, "recognizably so even though, the text being in Latin, there are none of the characteristic **w**'s, no thorns or yoghs, and the only **y** is in the scribe's surname," says Mooney, going on to identify other differences: "the script used for the oath differs slightly from the scribe's

more consistently Anglicana formata hand in Hengwrt and Ellesmere, being less rounded, more angular, in aspect and showing slightly more influence from the new Secretary script in its more frequent use of single-compartment **a** and occasional use of Secretary final **s**.”²³ Her conviction that this is still the hand of Hg and El relies instead on a different body of evidence: “Certain decorative features reveal him immediately, and the letterforms confirm the identification.”²⁴ The latter remark can be taken only in the weak sense that certain instances do not contradict the identification too violently: “Formation of the letters **g** with spike to right from the lower lobe, dotted **y** with upright left branch and crossing below the line,” – she had earlier commented on this letter’s near absence from the text – “Anglicana **a** taller than other letters of minim height, and final 8-shaped **s** are correct for this hand.”²⁵ The problem, though, is that “these scribes were working at a time when the co-existence of different scripts and different varieties of the same script furnished acceptable variant forms of each graph,” as Doyle and Parkes observe.²⁶ In other words, the letter forms cited here as common to both Pynkhurst’s confirmation and Hg-El “are correct for” any number of hands of this time and place.

The only solid evidence for the proposed identification is the fact that Pynkhurst’s confirmation contains certain decorative features found as well in Hg and El: the “‘tremolo’ or ‘tremolo and knot,’ similar to an **n** or to an **n** with knotted finishing stroke over and to the left of it,” such as those adorning ascenders on **h** and **l** in first line of the poem on Hg, fol. 2r (it will help the reader to consult facsimiles of Hg and El throughout this chapter),²⁷ and “the double-slash and dot decoration Pinkhurst uses on wide sweeping extensions to enlarged initials and as a decorative detail on heavy strokes that vertically divide lobes of enlarged ascenders” (initial letter of El, 16v), both of which adorn the top line and the signature on the left of the confirmation. The knotted tremolo, Mooney claims, “is used for ‘nota’ by other contemporary scribes, but Pinkhurst uses it also as a purely decorative feature, like a banner to the right of heightened ascenders,” as seen on the top line and in the signature of [Figure 1](#).²⁸ The entry for Hn in Mooney, Horobin, and Stubbs’s “Late Medieval English Scribes” database (www.medievalscribes.com) even calls this “the identifying mark of Adam Pinkhurst.” Similarly, Mooney asserts that the double-slash-and-dot motif “is so distinctive to Pinkhurst as to be virtually a signature in those pieces of his writing where he uses it.”²⁹

If these do constitute the “mark” and “signature” of Adam Pynkhurst, then the case that he copied Hengwrt and Ellesmere is established, and the claim that he is the referent of “Adam Scryveyne,” and thus Chaucer’s

scribe, perhaps more reasonable than [Chapter 1](#) suggested it to be. Indeed the rhetoric of Mooney's essay, which seems to allow for no doubt, suggests that this is the situation. Yet those designations are the *products*, not the foundations, of the argument in whose service they are summoned. Such features can constitute his "signature" and "mark" only if they occur nowhere else, and of course only if it is already known, on other grounds so as to avoid begging the question, that the items in question are in fact his. Circularity aside, it happens that this era produced many manuscripts, unattributable to Pynkhurst, with these features. The tremolo-and-knot in purely decorative function appears, for instance, in Kew, National Archives E 40/5267, letters patent copied by the chancery scribe Robert Muskham in 1381, as Horobin and Mooney note;³⁰ the *Piers Plowman* A–C splice that is now Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.14, roughly contemporary with Pynkhurst's confirmation,³¹ and the Register of Wills enrolled in the Archdeacons' Court of London ca. 1399–1400.³²

The double-slash, dot, double-slash motif is still more widely attested. For over a century before Pynkhurst inscribed his confirmation it had provided chancery clerks with a means of "display[ing] their own calligraphic skills by lengthening, thickening, exaggerating and decorating certain of the ascenders and capital letters in the king's style and title on the top line of the document," and is to be found in charters produced between 1291 and 1385.³³ The motif also pervades documents relating to the politics and administration of London and Westminster ca. 1380–1415: the deeds and wills enrolled in the Court of Hustings, the Plea and Memoranda Rolls, Letter Books H and I, and bills in the Mayor's Court, all in the Guildhall;³⁴ and from beyond, three Parliamentary petitions appealing Nicholas Brembre of treason ca. 1388,³⁵ Martin Seman's ca. 1395 account of recent events regarding the Scriveners Company,³⁶ and entries into the Mercers' Account Book, ca. 1409–12.³⁷

John Organ's Accounts

The confidence that these motifs constituted Pynkhurst's "mark" and "signature," then – the sole paleographical evidence presented to support the attribution of Hg and El to him, its supposed obviousness being the other plank – was not well founded, as further evidence has since confirmed. Yet the possibility that the identical scribe was responsible for the five items in which Mooney and Stubbs have found both of these decorative features is still worth serious attention, given that they are all localizable to London in the years surrounding 1400. These are Hg, El, W (Trinity B.15.17: *Piers*,

Rolle), N (appeal for Northampton), and O (John Organ's receipts in the Mercers' account book; the other items assigned to him have neither tremolo nor double-slash-and-dot), and all of them feature two further decorative elements found as well in his confirmation: exaggerated ascenders and the sets of oblique parallel lines within those ascenders. The characteristics that supposedly unite these five items under the banner of Pynkhurst, though, in fact set Hg and El apart from the rest. The top lines of a full 291 of the 294 sides of the *Piers* in W (as well as N's and most of those in O) feature exaggerated ascenders adorned with tremolos on their top lines, those in the *Piers* text usually adorned with oblique lines as well. The three empty top margins occur where that line is not the main text: 1r, elaborate illuminated capital with vinet at the beginning, 92r, top line boxed in red, and 108r, a passus division.³⁸ Hg is the opposite, exaggerated ascenders and tremolos appearing almost exclusively at incipits and explicits, and never on the top line.³⁹ El abounds in the top-line ascenders, at least – this, observes Daniel Mosser, is “[o]ne of the primary distinctions between Scribe B's work in Hg and El” – even if rarely with oblique lines or knotted tremolos.⁴⁰ And neither Hg nor El comes anywhere close to the other three in the density of double-slash-and-dot motifs: W, O, and N together average one every three sides; El, one every nine and a half sides; and Hg, one every 124 sides.⁴¹ If Pynkhurst copied these Chaucer manuscripts, he was absolutely enamored of decorations ca. 1395, abandoned them entirely when he came to copy Hg, and reintroduced them half-heartedly upon turning to El, otherwise his most elaborate production.⁴²

These items' decorative programs will arise throughout this discussion, but for now we turn to their respective scripts. The immediate problem with any attribution to Pynkhurst, as Mooney observes, is that lack of any **w** forms, thorns, and yoghs and presence of only two **y** forms in his confirmation. But matches of aspect and idiosyncratic forms between P and other items are so close, such as the near-absolute equivalence between its *incremento* (Fig. 1 line 8) and that in Figure 2 (line 5),⁴³ that we can work around the problem without too much difficulty. In both P and O this term is in an Anglicana Formata script in which one can observe “the care with which minims are made separately, each with a neat approach stroke,” and the way in which **i** is ticked “when in the company of other minims with a rounded stroke.”⁴⁴ Both texts feature two-compartment Anglicana **a** (*indigencia* Fig. 1 line 4; *Thoma* fol. 6r [= Mooney's Fig. 7] left col., third from bottom) and exhibit substantial influence from Secretary, indicated by single-compartment **a** (*Adam, curial(is)* Fig. 1 line 1; *Bartelot* Fig. 2 line 2, *dat* line 5).⁴⁵

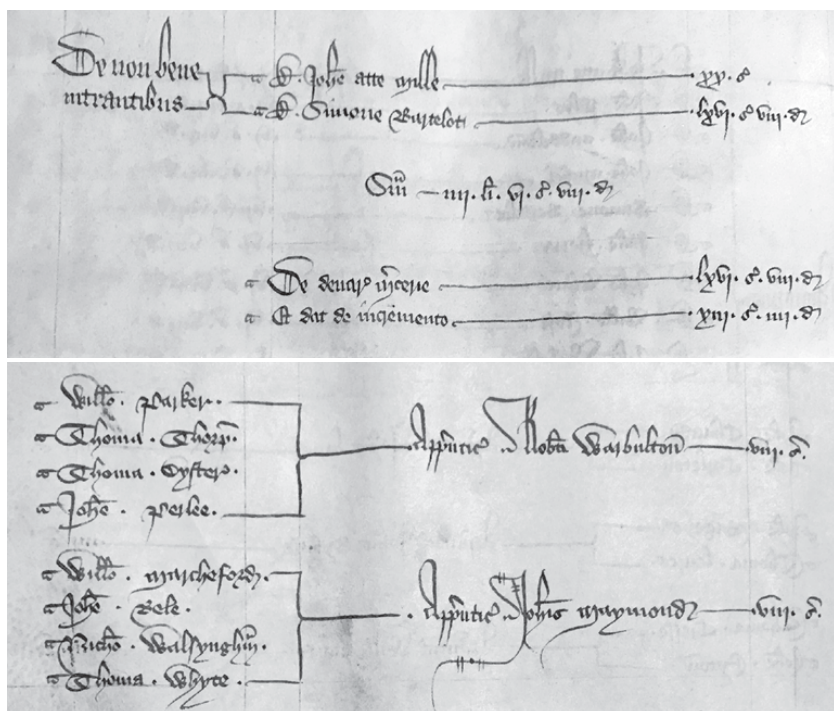


Figure 2 John Organ's accounts, Mercers' Company Wardens' Account Book, hand of Adam Pynkhurst, fol. 10v top, 7v bottom. Reproduced by kind permission of the Mercers' Company.

These two texts also use “a larger and bolder version” of their main script, “with more or less of the broken minims and angled strokes characteristic of Bastard Anglicana.”⁴⁶ This is seen in Adam’s signature to the left, whose enlarged **d** with a topstroke to the right, decorated by a double slash, and broken minims find near-exact matches in the second term of Organ’s accounts, *denar(iorum)*, in a line that also features the double-slash-and-dot and tremolo motifs on initial **R** (fol. 6r; see also *De non bene intransibibus* top left Fig. 2). The large curl in place of a dot above the **y** in Pynkhurst’s signature on the left appears four times in the ten sides of O, including *Berkway* on 6r, fifth name in the second set of brackets. Also notable are the “three curving lines that break the straight line, which are also found breaking the line of the brace to the right of” Pynkhurst’s confirmation, displayed also in *Austyn*, bottom center-right of 6r.⁴⁷ Pynkhurst formed fabulous triangles from the exaggerated descenders of the **A**, **P**, and

s of his signature, modest versions of which O attests once in an enlarged initial (fol. 7r) and once in the main text (*Joh(ann)is* fol. 9v [=Mooney's Fig. 4], right col. row 5).

To my mind the perfect match of aspects, both Anglicana Formata and Bastard Anglicana, combined with this substantial set of distinctive features, clinches the case that Organ's accounts, produced in London a few years before Pynkhurst inscribed his confirmation in that city, are in his hand as well. Mooney, too, assigns O to "Pynkhurst," though in my judgment this body of evidence undermines her use of that name for the scribe of Hg and El, an attribution that, in the absence of identical aspect, relies on the much smaller set of similarities that brought O into the picture in the first place. In these manuscripts' 900-plus sides I have found no curls above lower case *y* forms (one adorns a capital *Y*, El 44v), no sets of three curving lines,⁴⁸ one descending near-triangle in El (137v), and a few instances of Bastard Anglicana in Hengwrt's incipits and other displayed words but not in Ellesmere, whose Latin terms instead "are larger and bolder than the surrounding text,"⁴⁹ as in the phrase "*In principio / Mulier est hominis confusio*," lines 11–12 main text of El fol. 182v. Perhaps it would be premature to exclude Hg and El from the Pynkhurst canon, but at this stage, if anything is to be added to his confirmation, it is O.⁵⁰ We should beware, however, of assuming that Pynkhurst was a permanent employee of the Mercers' Company, a sense that has grown up from Mooney's attribution of both this and the Mercers' petition of 1387/88 to him (see Chapter 3 on the latter). The company employed "trained scribes who did piece-work as paid menials," as Anne Sutton remarks, with *employed* being "the key word."⁵¹ Adam Pynkhurst is among the earliest of these professional scribes to be identified.

Trinity B.15.17

Organ's receipts have not provided any thorns or yoghs, but plenty of *y* forms at the least. More important, we now have solid evidence that a number of features that do not figure in Mooney's arguments, such as Bastard Anglicana and descending triangles, are not unique to Pynkhurst's confirmation. The case for W's addition to his oeuvre is just as strong as that for O. To begin with those *y* forms with large curls, this manuscript features at least 182 in its *Piers Plowman* text.⁵² A more obvious parallel is with Adam's predilection for huge and often elaborately decorated capital initial letters, with which nearly all of Trinity B.15.17's 260 sides open as well (this would be a good moment for readers to open the online facsimile

of Tr in an internet browser in addition to those of Hg and El).⁵³ Folio 87v's initial **R** looks like a perfect combination of that opening O fol. 6r and the form used elsewhere in O, with angled upper compartment and lead-in stroke forming a right angle with the leg (Fig. 2, fol. 7v, second col. right). In turn, two other of W's **R** forms, on folios 31r and 113v, are near-identical matches with these in O.

These rare **R** forms help secure the attribution of W to the O scribe / Pynkhurst, but much more common, and equally distinctive, is the ornamental **A** that opens no fewer than forty-nine of the *Piers* text's sides,⁵⁴ which lacks cross-bar and is usually adorned by three or four items from Pynkhurst's repertoire, such as that on 130v, which features one of W's thirty-two instances of the three curved lines breaking a straight line (Figure 3).⁵⁵

Many of these **A** forms have the descending triangles found as well in O and P.⁵⁶ Hg, by contrast, has no such capital letters inaugurating any of its pages, while of El's nearest equivalents to these, its **R** reverses the ratio of compartmental sizes and forms its lead-in stroke with a large curve (41v, 47v, 136v), while its closest **A** has doubled cross-bar (128v, 146r, 200v). Conversely, El's most frequent ornamental **A**, too, has "a double cross-bar and sweeping strokes on the left," doubled left leg, and occasional ornamentation with double-slash and dot (18v, 20v, 21r), but none of the other characteristic features that adorn the **A**'s in W.⁵⁷ Likewise the *Here* of Hg's and El's incipits and explicits often opens with an **H** whose combination of large curved foot extending to the left below the stalk, oblique lines intersected with perpendicular lines, and row of dots looking like tassels hanging from a curtain, is unattested in W (e.g., Fig. 4, top line; that on Hg, 89r has more tassels).

The initial terms of W's fol. 113v, *Rex glorie*, display its scribe's use of Bastard Anglicana for its passus divisions and Latin quotations and his frequent combination of the two scripts in a single line. The angled strokes of the second letter, **e**, and its **g** in *gloria*, featuring diamond-shaped lower section, find equivalents in O's opening *Recepicio* and *Organ* on 6r.⁵⁸ Another instance of W's Bastard Anglicana, its explicit, is still more helpful, via its instantiation of nearly the entirety of Pynkhurst's extensive decorative repertoire. The slashes and dots, triangle descenders, oblique lines, exaggerated ascenders, knotted tremolos, two slashes without dots, and three curved lines are all here. This explicit also boasts three other of Pynkhurst's motifs not found in O. Most elaborate is the adornment of initial capital letters with patterns of triangles, dots, parallel lines, circles, zigzags, and clovers as in the massive **A** in Adam's signature and **E** in top line *Et*, and for instance

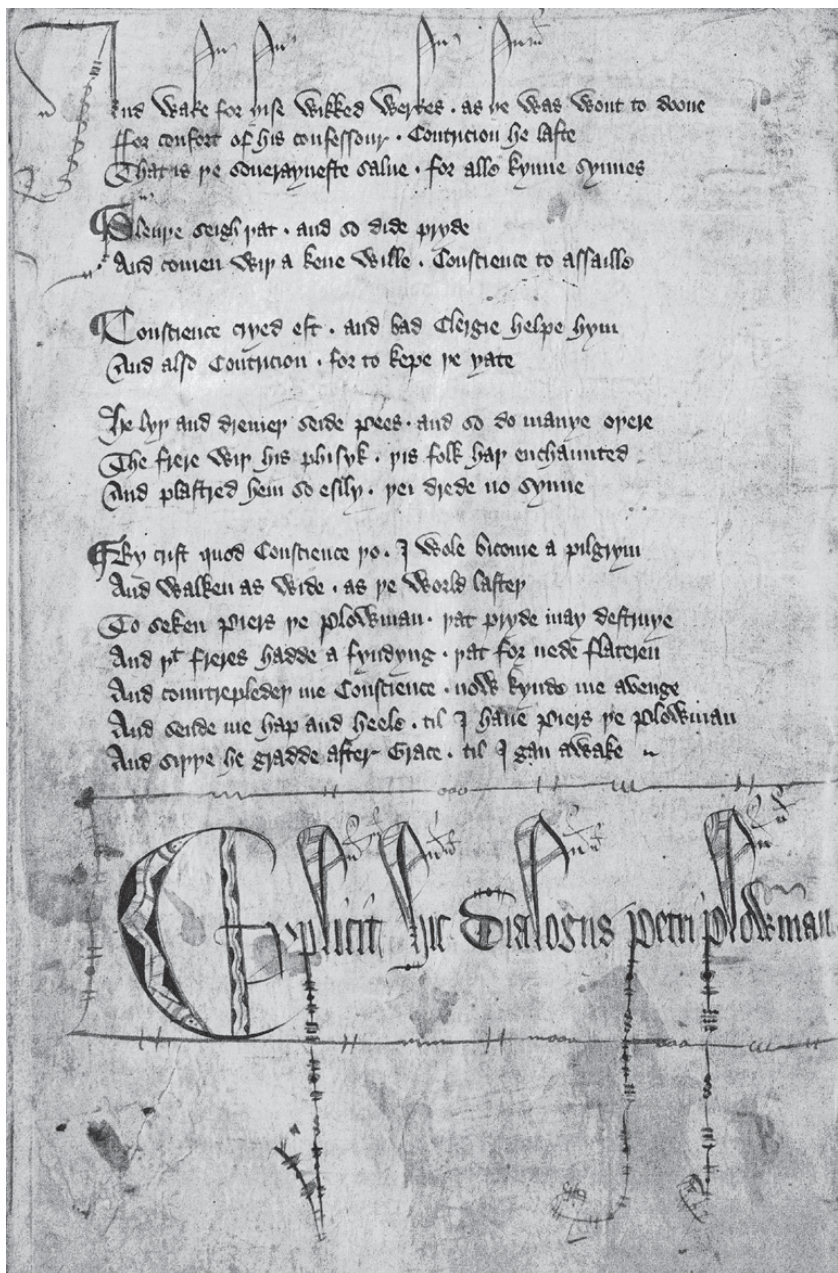


Figure 3 Final folio of *Piers Plowman* (W), hand of Adam Pynkhurst.

Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.17, fol. 130v.

Reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

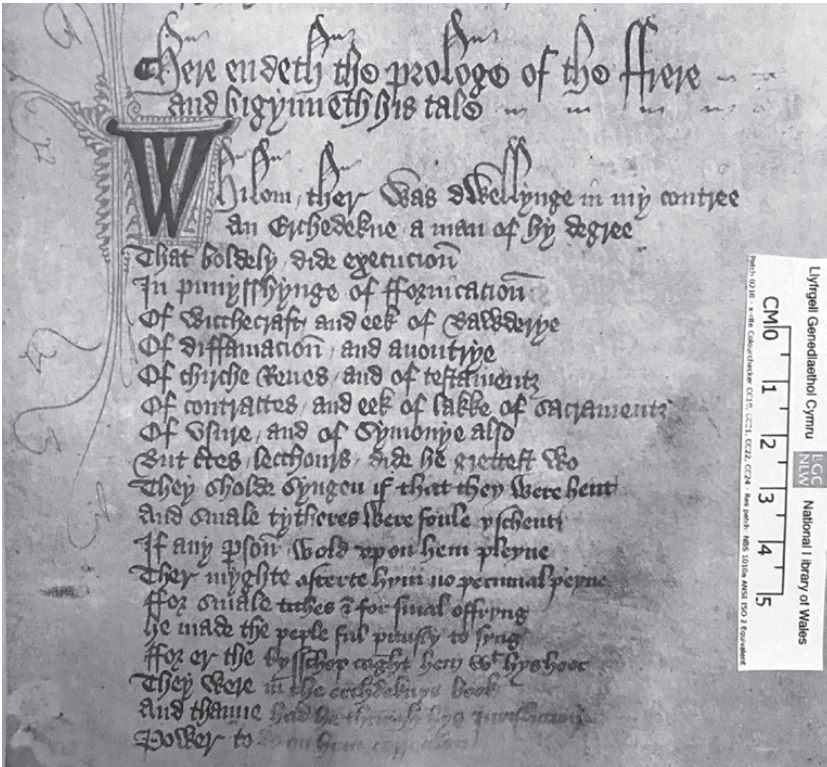


Figure 4 The Hengwrt *Canterbury Tales* (Hg), main text, hand of Scribe B (Hand A of Hg); replacement half lines in final ten lines, Hand D of Hg, identified by Simon Horobin as Hoccleve. Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS Peniarth 392D (Hengwrt), fol. 74r, bottom.

Reproduced by kind permission of the National Library of Wales.

on one of the triangle- and slash-and-dot-adorned ornamental capitals that initiates W fol. 56v. While this is a very common motif in both charters and Middle English poetic manuscripts, as in the Cambridge University Library Dd.4.24 of the *Canterbury Tales*,⁵⁹ Hg and El between them have no zigzags, and only a few clover-like attempts at decoration (e.g., Hg, 112r; El, 39r, 130v, 193r).

Second are the explicit's half-dozen sets of three circles, looking like snowballs or traffic lights, found in Pynkhurst's confirmation on the brace to the right, balancing the three curving lines on the other side of the tremolo and knot, and in the explicit once on the center of the red box's top, twice on the right half of its bottom, and once on each of the three

exaggerated descenders. This is the eighteenth appearance of snowballs in W, with another nine to appear over eight pages in *The Form of Living*: a rate of one appearance every eleven sides or so.⁶⁰ The rate in Hg and El is almost thirty times less dense, at one every 321 sides (three in 964), all in Hg (fols. 128r, 190v, 234v). Lest anyone wonder whether these snowballs might constitute the “signature” Mooney assigned to other motifs, they appear as well on the bracket below the confirmation of Matthew Honycod *alias* Frome in the Scriveners Company Common Paper three pages after Pynkhurst’s (p. 59). Finally, the **E** and two **I**’s of this explicit both have versions of the “formalized fish as a design element,” very common in charters and the like,⁶¹ which Pynkhurst employs in his fabulous **A**, with its two minnows along the straight line from the knotted tremolo (here, fishing line) to the bottom of the triangle, and **E**, whose left side looks like a sun-fish; this is a bit more prominent in Hg and El than the other motifs.⁶²

We turn now to W’s aspect and characteristics of non-decorative letters in his Anglicana Formata script, which, like P’s and O’s, bears signs of influence from Secretary in its **a** forms.⁶³ Matches on the level of word or word-section between it and Pynkhurst’s confirmation, which like *incremento* are characterized by carefully formed minims and in this first example curved ticks to distinguish **i** in a sequence of minims, are *evidentem* (P, line 17) / *evidence* (W, 94r line 9), and *circumspector(um)* (P, line 5) / *circumscised* (W, 101r line 5). The latter can be compared with Scribe B’s *circumstances* (Hg, 30v line 7), which, as opposed to P’s and W’s terms, displays the “prevalent rightward slant of the vertical penstrokes” of its scribe’s hand.⁶⁴ If one compares W’s *Clerkes* (52v top line) with *Clerk* from Organ’s receipts (9v top line of bottom bracketed section) on the one hand and with Hg’s *Clerkys* (173v top line) and El’s *Clerk* (88r mid-folio header) on the other, the difference in their respective ducts of ascenders on **l** and **k** will be apparent. The points atop the Hg’s and El’s ascenders often feature a curl, seen faintly atop the **k** in Hg’s *Clerkys*, and sometimes form a circle, while the down stroke itself often angles away to create a wide space within, as in the **H** of Hg’s incipits and explicits discussed above (which also has that curl) and in, for instance, *ther ... dwellynge* Fig. 4 top line main text. P, O, and W very rarely display such width and never feature such circles atop their ascenders. In addition, the leg of Hg and El’s **h** form heads up from a point about a quarter of the way up the stalk, while that of O (*Michel*, 9v line 9 left col.) and W emerges from a sharp angle at the base of the stalk (*his, he* Fig. 3 line 2). This **h** leg in O and W also frequently features a standard loop curving back under the stalk, as in W’s *his* and *he* just cited, but it often heads down, perhaps

angling a bit to the left, sometimes stopping there but then often curving sharply back to the right or upper right in a hairstroke, as in O's *Michel* just cited (with which one can compare W's *Michel*, 4IV line 3), and W's *seigh* Fig. 3 line 4.

Descenders of other letter forms, as well, are distinctive in O and W. Turville-Petre and Duggan note that in W "the descender of *y* has a pronounced curve, so that the dot often written above it is unnecessary,"⁶⁵ and its extension often continues beneath the following letter as in for instance *pilgrym* Fig. 3 line 11; for P see *Pynkhurst* Fig. 1 top line and for O, *Walsyngham* Fig. 2 penultimate line left column. Hg's and El's *h* forms, though, only very rarely have tails curving back to the right, and when they do it is nearly always in headers or on bottom lines;⁶⁶ their *y*'s sometimes do this but usually curve up neatly under the same letter, as in Hg's *dwellynge ... my* Fig. 4 first line of main text. Roberts, too, observes that the Trinity *Piers* scribe forms *y*'s differently from how Scribe B does, also pointing to other features in Hg-El "that are hardly matched in the TCC Langland hand: a flower-like shape of a rather cursively constructed *w*; the frequently short descenders of *f* and long *-s*."⁶⁷

Organ's accounts and Trinity B.15.17 also share forms of many non-ornamental capital letters not found in Pynkhurst's confirmation. Their capital *H* forms have "a loop through the ascender" so as to distinguish them from *h*⁶⁸ – compare *He* line 8 with *his* line 9, Fig. 3 – as do many *K* and *L* forms. The loops of capital *W* usually soar in parallel, non-intersecting curves (*Walsyngham*, *Whyte* Fig. 2 bottom two lines left col.; five instances Fig. 3 line 1). Capital *T* forms are often characterized by a loop that "circles back to the top stroke enclosing the whole letter" which begins with a horizontal stroke atop the letter (*Thoma* Fig. 2 bottom line col. 1; *That* Fig. 3 line 3).⁶⁹ And as Mooney observes, "[w]hen writing doubled *f* for the uppercase form, he connects the ascenders, forming a ligature between ascenders that sometimes extends to further ascenders in the line, as in the Mercers' account book, fol. 6r and in Trinity College B.15.17, fol. 65v" top line.⁷⁰ The latter sometimes does likewise with ornamental *W* (*W*, 118r top line). In Hg and El, again by contrast, the *H*, *K*, and *L* forms have only a dot or two rather than loop (Hg, 4r top line), loops of *W* almost always intersect (*was dwellynge* Fig. 4 first line main text),⁷¹ the *T* is very rarely enclosed by a loop and its top stroke usually angles downwards, often sharply, unlike W's (*That* Fig. 4 line 3 main text);⁷² double-*f* does form similar ligatures but they are shorter (*ffrere* Fig. 4 top line); and there are no *W* forms with ligatures extending so far.

The Appeal for Northampton and an Early *Boece* (Peniarth 393D)

While much shorter and more uniform in appearance than O or W, the 1393 appeal on behalf of John of Northampton (N), too, “attests to all the distinctive letter-forms and decorative devices that are typical of Pynkhurst.”⁷³ Its *Simone* (Fig. 5 line 12 final term) looks identical to those in Organ’s receipts (e.g., Fig. 2 line 2), where by contrast El’s version of the name has the characteristic rightward slant and minims taller in relation to the S, which in turn has a smaller lower compartment (217r line 24 main text).

With *Piers*, N has in common *Shordych* (Fig. 5 line 4; W, 78v line 8; compare *shore* and *dych* Hg, 88v line 28, 99v line 28). N’s initial O, not shown here, has sunfish motif and clover-like decoration, while on the top line the R and W, tails on y and h, and curl above y (*Kyng*; also, *Risby* final line of image) on its top line all accord perfectly with those described above, as do of course its exaggerated ascenders, oblique lines, slash-and-dot motif, tremolos, and, most important, aspect.

It is also possible that Pynkhurst ornamented the fragment of Chaucer’s *Boece* in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS Peniarth 393D (Hn), though differences in aspect, letter formation, and dialect show that he could not have been its main scribe. Estelle Stubbs, focusing on its knotted tremolos, originally suggested that this manuscript, or at least its decoration, might have been the Hg-El scribe’s;⁷⁴ but other items added in red include large curl above y (*hym*, last word top line, fol. 9r), oblique lines (in the exaggerated ascender on d in *wonder*, top line, fol. 9v), and especially the boxing of textual divisions, which looks identical to Pynkhurst’s boxing of catchwords, passus divisions, and explicit in his *Piers Plowman*, as seen in Fig. 3. These resemblances are very striking, though one ought to be wary of identifying hands involved only in the provision of decorative motifs. If this is indeed his hand, and if Pynkhurst indeed retired to his home region of Surrey ca. 1400, as I suggested in the Introduction, Hn would become the first manuscript of any of Chaucer’s works securely datable to his lifetime.⁷⁵

In sum, the only extant manuscripts, including the Hg and El manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*, to attest all of the features – aspect, duct, combination and density of decorative features, and letter forms – are these, which thus together make up the complete known Pynkhurst corpus:

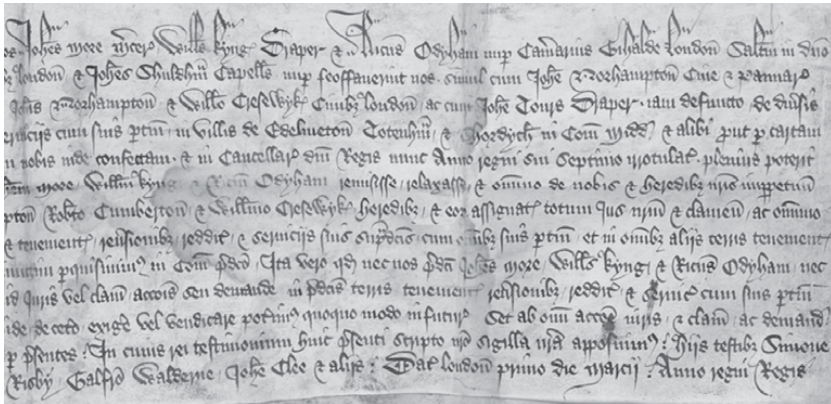


Figure 5 Charter on behalf of John of Northampton (1393), hand of Adam Pynkhurst.
© The British Library Board, Additional Charter 40542.

- N:** BL Additional Charter 40542, deed relating to John of Northampton, 1393
- O:** Organ's receipts for 1391–92 in Mercers' Company, Wardens' Account Book, 1344, 1347 to 1464, fols. 6r–10v
- P:** Pynkhurst's confirmation in the Scriveners Company Common Paper, p. 56
- W:** *Piers Plowman*, Rolle, short poem in Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.17

And, possibly, **Hn:** The Peniarth 393D fragment of *Boece*, ornamentation only. (See also Introduction above for the possibility that a petition of ca. 1401, for "Adam Penkhurst," is in his hand as well.)

A Piers Plowman Manuscript by the Hengwrt-Ellesmere Scribe?

Given this situation, how could the hand of Hg and El have been identified as "unmistakably" Pynkhurst's? The background is that just before Pynkhurst's confirmation became part of the conversation, Mooney had co-written, with Simon Horobin, an essay arguing that W was "a *Piers Plowman* manuscript by the Hengwrt / Ellesmere scribe." Some readers might wonder whether my discussion above is moot so far in the face of this major claim, even if that claim was put forward before Organ's receipts or the appeal for Northampton had entered the picture or the

relevance of Hn was apparent. We ought therefore to test Horobin and Mooney's methodology and argumentation on their own terms. The rest of this chapter does so regarding their paleographical claims; [Chapter 3](#), their linguistic ones.

Although readers have been able to compare the hands of W, Hg, and El in facsimile since 1913, "no one has hitherto remarked on any very close resemblance to the Hengwrt hand except that of the Ellesmere Chaucer, to which we can now add the Trinity Cambridge Gower and the Hatfield fragment of *Troilus*," as Doyle and Parkes observed in 1979.⁷⁶ By this moment in time Doyle had amassed a deep knowledge of Trinity B.15.17. A few years earlier he had advised George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson on their descriptions of *Piers Plowman* manuscripts (W "bears a strong resemblance to the hand of the Ellesmere manuscript, and while not by the Ellesmere scribe, is pretty certainly of the same school and period");⁷⁷ on two occasions he compared W's and El's exaggerated ascenders, tremolos, and the like;⁷⁸ and in his 1986 overview of the manuscripts of *Piers Plowman* he opined that W was "written in an anglicana formata which in certain respects resembles that of a prolific Staffordshire scribe of the same period and in others that of the scribe of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*, with the language of which it agrees, and the use of bastard anglicana, boxing and bracing for display is similar."⁷⁹

Upon the appearance of Horobin and Mooney's 2004 essay the situation changed. The W scribe's current identity as "Adam Pynkhurst," not then suggested, is the result not of the comparison of that manuscript's style, proportions, aspect, duct, and decorative features with those of Pynkhurst's confirmation, but rather of a two-stage process: 1) W became a manuscript by the Hg-El scribe; 2) Adam, as the Hg-El scribe according to "Chaucer's Scribe," was thus also scribe of W. It is now clear, though, that W is not just a nice addition to what critics have seen as the more important Chaucer attributions, but the linchpin of the entire case that Pynkhurst copied Hg and El, without which there would be no question of whether he is the addressee of "Adam Scryveyne." "Parkes would identify 'Adam' with everything *except* the two central *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts," reports Ralph Hanna, a position anticipating my own,⁸⁰ while Roberts has more recently rejected the attribution of W (as well as Pynkhurst's confirmation and much else) to Scribe B.⁸¹ At the other end of the spectrum is Hanna's characterization of Horobin and Mooney's case as "plausibly certain."⁸² The most common response, skepticism, is

represented by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton's comment that Scribe B "was the copyist of many works by Chaucer, not only the Hengwrt and Ellesmere *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts but perhaps also (though this is less certain) the Trinity College, Cambridge B.15.17 manuscript of *Piers Plowman*, on which all modern scholarly editions of the B-text are based."⁸³ I would imagine that the proposal's lukewarm reception is the result of, first, the ease with which the shared features among these manuscripts can be attributed to two scribes from a similar or identical milieu, and second, the difference of W's aspect, letter forms, decorative program, and language from those of Hg and El.

"Given that almost all the characteristics by which Doyle identifies this hand are present in B.15.17, and that the aspect is different only to the extent that one would expect of a scribe writing Langland's alliterative verse as opposed to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*," say Horobin and Mooney, "there seems to us no doubt that [W] is the work of the same hand" as that of Hg and El.⁸⁴ All rests on that qualification, "only to the extent," which responds, again, to the "difference ... in the aspect of the hands" between Scribe B and the scribe of MS W.⁸⁵ Doyle and Parkes describe Hg and El's "most distinctive qualities" as their aspect and duct, manifested in "a vertical impetus," setting them apart from W, whose "distinct spaces left between words, together with short ascenders and descenders," as Horobin and Mooney acknowledge, "give a boxy look to the words and result in a horizontal, as opposed to a vertical, aspect to the overall appearance of the text."⁸⁶ Their explanation, which they attribute to an unnamed colleague, is that scribes of *Piers Plowman* adopted a different aspect in order to highlight that poem's alliterative terms.⁸⁷ Roberts points out, however, that "the spacing does not seem particularly to emphasize alliterative words."⁸⁸ How would readers recognize that the spacing was at all unusual unless they had other manuscripts known to be by this scribe at hand available for comparison? Even if they somehow did, how could they know its purpose was to highlight the alliteration? Another scribe of *Piers Plowman* "frequently rubricates the first letters of alliterative series," as Noelle Phillips remarks,⁸⁹ and rubrication does seem a much better strategy for a scribe with such an aim. Finally, the spacing of W's prose *Form of Living* (fols. 131r-47r) is "the same" as that of its *Piers* text, as Horobin and Mooney say about eight of its other features.⁹⁰

The essay's discussion of letter forms, too, might mislead those readers who do not take the time to compare the authors' descriptions with the

originals. Its “Appendix and the accompanying illustrations” set forth the paleographical support for their argument that W is by Scribe B, so we read, but that Appendix, “Graphetic Features Characteristic of the Hengwrt-Ellesmere Scribe,” for which Mooney was solely responsible, proceeds as if the argument were already proven.⁹¹ For instance, in describing the forms of majuscule A found in Ellesmere, Doyle cites “a conspicuous, less frequent form,” which “consists of a wide upsweeping open headstroke in the left margin and an angular foot on the line, with an oblique separate stroke, decorated with short cross-strokes, cutting the curve,” which he exemplifies by the initial letter on folio 10r line 32 or, “more ornamentally,” that initiating folio 3v.⁹² Yet for this form Mooney instead cites W’s initial letter on 125v, almost identical to that in line 1 of [Figure 3](#) but with descending triangle rather than curl on the left leg, with neither acknowledgment that it looks so much different from the ones in El by which Doyle exemplified it (cf. above, at [note 57](#)) nor explanation of why it does so.⁹³ This might have made sense if the authors had already argued the case, but this, the Appendix, is claimed to *constitute* that argument. It was only after I had spent hours going through facsimiles of Ellesmere and Hengwrt on my own, well before I had reason to doubt the attribution, that I realized that this ornamental A in fact does not appear in those manuscripts.

Horobin and Mooney’s remark that “[a]ll the features he used to identify the scribe ... are also to be found in the Trinity College, Cambridge manuscript B.15.17 copy of *Piers Plowman*,” then, is inaccurate with regard to this A, at the least.⁹⁴ But it is also misleading in its treatment of Doyle’s characterization of Scribe B’s details of writing as a list of diagnostic features that can even override absence of identical aspect. Thus, while Doyle does cite the El scribe’s “distinctive formation of g, in which the strokes often cross to create a projecting spike on the right of the lower lobe but occasionally fail to complete it,” and “the final high 8-shaped s,” he says neither anything about any uniqueness to B’s hand nor that these features were “used” to identify Hg and El as by the same scribe.⁹⁵ In “Chaucer’s Scribe” Mooney adds the remark that when several of the letter forms typical of (her) Pynkhurst occur together, they “may be taken as evidence of his hand,” which is far from anything found in her Doylean source.⁹⁶ His silence on the potentially diagnostic value of these letter forms is a sensible response to the fact that they are not distinctive to Scribe B even when they occur together.

Take a document that Horobin and Mooney themselves cite, Robert Muskhams charter, the one with tremolos on its top-line exaggerated ascenders discussed above (above, [note 30](#)) ([Figure 6](#)).

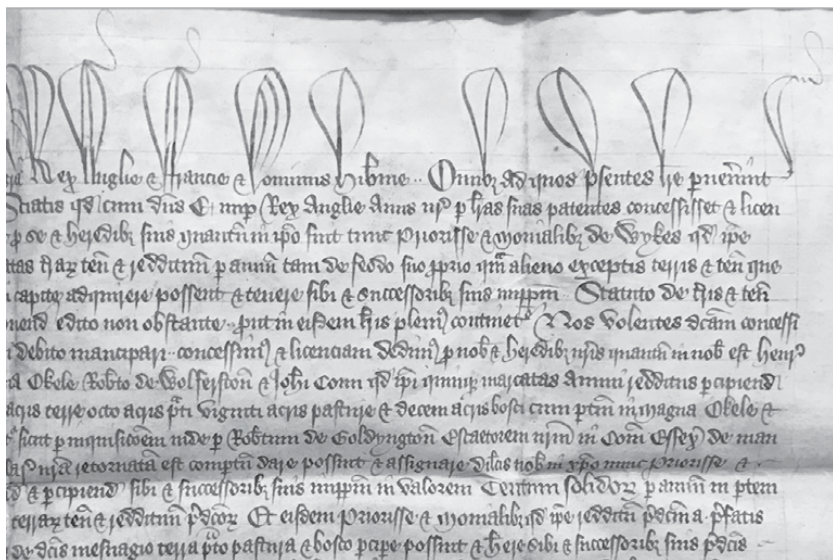


Figure 6 Letters patent, hand of Robert Muskham. Kew, National Archives E 40/5267.

This charter features the “most distinctive” of Scribe B’s forms, the **g** with projecting spike on the lower lobe (*magna* line 9; *Goldyngton* line 10); the feature that “distinguishes” him, the large final 8-shaped **s** (*terris* line 4; *redditus* line 8); as well as several of the other forms Mooney catalogues: an upper-case **A** “with both upper and lower lobes closed” (*Anglie* line 2), “upper case **W** with wide curved approach strokes at tops of the left and central down-strokes” (*Wolferston* line 8), exaggerated top-line ascenders, and “anglicana two-compartment **a** (... taller than other minim-height letters)” (*patentes* line 2) – an extraordinarily common form, perhaps more common than two-compartment **a** equal to other minim-height letters. His term *henr(ico)*, too (line 7 final term), concludes with “secretary ‘v’-shaped form” of final **r**, “leaning to the right” though with the curve indicating abbreviation on top.⁹⁷ Mooney’s catalogue, as Roberts objects, “is long, so long indeed as to be rather a listing of some variant letter forms available in Anglicana script than evidence for the individuality of a single hand,”⁹⁸ a judgment that Horobin in effect endorses elsewhere.⁹⁹ The *absence* of a group of these features from, or their replacement with unattested features by, any given manuscript might constitute evidence against an attribution, but their presence says nothing about whether others are by this scribe as well.

Mooney has re-demonstrated, and taken much further than the evidence warrants, what we already knew: that Trinity B.15.17 bears a strong resemblance to the hand of the Ellesmere manuscript, and is pretty certainly of the same school and period (see [note 77](#)).

Some readers might wonder whether the differences I have catalogued between W and Hg-El – density of slashes-and-dots and snowballs, spacing, length of ascenders and descenders, use of wavy lines and decorated descending triangles, formation of **y**, **h**, **W**, **T**, **H**, **L**, **K**, ornamental **A** and initial **R**, curls above ascenders, presentation of Bastard Anglicana, and the rest – might have been due to a change in the scribe's habits over time. Yet the aspect of the two petitions of ca. 1388 that Mooney and Stubbs have attributed to Scribe B is very similar to that of Hengwrt and Ellesmere, and distant from that of Pynkhurst.¹⁰⁰ The claim would thus be that Pynkhurst employed his Hg hand in 1388, switched to his “Pynkhurst” one for the years 1392–95, and then back to the Hg one after the turn of the century. This is the cost of abandoning aspect as the foundation of the identification. The approach adopted is a variation on the claim that Pynkhurst was passionate about his decorations ca. 1395, all but abandoned them a decade later in Hg, and brought them back half-heartedly for El. And those readers willing to grant so large a scale of change regarding this fundamental body of indicators would need to explain to themselves why it is Scribe B, rather than one of Scribes A, C, D, Hoccleve, the Hm 114 scribe, the Dd scribe, or anyone else, that in their judgments Pynkhurst turned into. The answer to date has been that his ascenders, tremolos, and slash-and-dot motifs render the attribution obvious, but that answer is both arbitrary and based on the ill-founded assumption that such characteristics were diagnostic.

“It seems necessary to explain striking differences between the TCC Langland hand and scribe B as well as to point to similarities,” says Roberts in her essay on giving Scribe B a name.¹⁰¹ The list of striking differences between W and Hg-El is substantial, and their character substantive, yet Horobin and Mooney only offer what I take to be a subjective, unprecedented, and unlikely explanation of the crucial category of aspect and remain silent concerning letter forms and the biggest difference, the respective decorative programs. Neither do they explain why their approach is preferable to the alternative. Here is the corollary to Roberts's point: that there is no compelling reason to fit all these disparate characteristics into a single scribe's career. If the position maintained by both Doyle and Parkes themselves, that W is not by Scribe B, is indeed problematic, it seems reasonable to expect the problems to be identified and the evidence supporting the

difficult alternative to be identified. Doyle's belief that two separate scribes were responsible for these respective productions always made good sense and did not come up against any problems. Which means, in light of the evidence presented above, that there is no foundation for the idea that Adam Pynkhurst either knew Chaucer or had anything to do with his work apart from the possibility that he might have embellished a manuscript of *Boece*.

Whether he knew Scribe B, though, is a different matter. The similarities of certain features of decoration and hand that led to his conflation with Pynkhurst in the first place, and their mutual access to the work of Langland (Pynkhurst) and Chaucer (B), suggests the possibility that they were part of a close network of scribes, perhaps including the scribe of *The Canterbury Tales* in Cambridge University Library MS Dd.4.24.¹⁰² Pynkhurst is not among the nine textwriters, scriveners, and stationers who made up the community of book artisans around Paternoster Row ca. 1390–1410 as identified by C. Paul Christianson, but that list would be a good place to continue the search for Scribe B and the Dd scribe, beginning with the most prominent of this group: Thomas Marleburgh, John Robert, and John Roulande.¹⁰³ In her brilliant essay “Locating Scribal Activity in Late-Medieval London,” Mooney suggests that the relatively few numbers of textwriters or stationers Christianson cites might be taken as “evidence that the textwriting portion of book production was not taking place in this area” and might have been “carried out as a ‘home industry’” in the City’s liberties by non-members of the relevant guilds, who would be more difficult to identify.¹⁰⁴ However the search is conducted, it would be profitable to speculate on how the study of Middle English manuscript production would look if descending triangles and y’s with large curls rather than the double-slash-and-dot and tremolo motifs had been deemed the “signs” or “signatures” of Adam Pynkhurst. It might have been one in which these three scribes were seen as the collaborators who set the standard for their associates; or it might have been something altogether different.

*Pynkhurst's London English and the
Dilemma of Copy-Text*

If the Hengwrt-Ellesmere scribe did not copy the *Piers Plowman* in Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.17 (W), I have argued, then he was not Adam Pynkhurst. To date, however, those critics who might not have absolute confidence in the whole series of Linne Mooney's attributions have instead persevered with the Pynkhurst identification "at least for Hengwrt and Ellesmere" but not for this *Piers* copy.¹ Because its attribution to Scribe B, as the Hg-El scribe is also known, occurred before he became "Pynkhurst," the Trinity *Piers* has been obscured by critics' much stronger interest in "Adam Scryveyne" and the early *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts. Thus only Jane Roberts has explicitly rejected the attribution of Trinity B.15.17 to him (as well as the identification of Pynkhurst as B). For everyone else, especially those who have been excited by the discovery of "Chaucer's own scribe" and do not want to give him up so easily, Horobin and Mooney's earlier argument demands more attention than it has received. In particular, their essay is notable in that it provides something of an escape hatch, beyond the appeal to a scribe's differing treatment of alliterative verse, for those who agree that the hands are similar but no more. It does so by promoting dialect to a status equivalent to handwriting as a criterion for scribal attribution. If my attribution of Trinity B.15.17 to Adam Pynkhurst is accurate, then, we face the urgent question of whether its language provides evidence for their attribution of it to B, that is, Mooney's Pynkhurst, and if it does, whether this similarity is strong enough to compensate for the relative weaknesses of the paleographical half of Horobin and Mooney's essay.

This chapter addresses these questions via the fullest tally yet of W's, Hg's, and El's respective attestations of diagnostic terms, especially those involving the *y* and yogh characters, and then turns to the topics identified as the most important sites implicated by Horobin and Mooney's discovery: the viability of "Type III" London English as a category in the history of the language; the extent to which a single scribe of that

type could vary his spellings, brought about by another piece of Mooney's vision, her belief that B copied the Mercers' petition of 1387/88; and George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson's use of Trinity B.15.17 as copy-text for their revolutionary edition of *Piers Plowman* B. All of this provides an occasion for reflection on the relationship between historical linguistics and critical editing. At stake are the character of Adam Pynkhurst's language and the urgent question of how the different methodologies used to determine that character and to present it to the world – paleography, history of the language, and critical editing, among others – work, or do not work, together.

Yogh: Trinity B.15.17 and Scribe B's Corpus

Horobin and Mooney, after presenting their paleographical case, assert that “the linguistic evidence supports the identification of the Trinity manuscript as the work of Scribe B.”² At first glance the verb *supports* seems to indicate something active and positive, in the way that, say, the match of handwriting between Hg and El “supports” those manuscripts' ascription to a single hand. It is true, as Horobin has elsewhere observed, that “dialectal evidence can ... be used to identify the work of a single scribe copying more than one manuscript,” yet that statement refers to “how the dialectal similarity” of two manuscripts (Rolle and the *Cursor Mundi*) led Angus McIntosh “to make a comparison of their handwriting,” which he found to be identical as well.³ Had the hands not matched, though, their linguistic match would not somehow have “supported” the attribution. Dialectal analysis can either reveal possibilities of attribution, as in the McIntosh episode, or simply fail to provide evidence against an attribution where such might have been possible, which, so Horobin and Mooney believe, fits the Trinity B.15.17 situation. Since “literatim copying remained a common practice in the later period, especially when a scribe was reproducing a literary text written by a named author,” this is as much as one can hope for.⁴ Horobin and Mooney's term “supports” is at best a way of indicating that the language of Trinity B.15.17 does not diverge from that of Hg and El enough to disprove the attribution on its own.⁵

This claim contradicts M. L. Samuels's “earlier comparison of many of the same forms” that appear in Horobin and Mooney's table of the spellings of W, Hg, and El, a comparison that did not issue in the identification of W as the Hg-El scribe's. Horobin and Mooney, though, point out that, since Samuels had erred by wrongly including *such(e)*, *moche*, and *meche* among El's spellings of SUCH and MUCH,⁶ his comparison “masks the closeness of the relationship and may have contributed to a

general reluctance to identify the Trinity manuscript as the work of Scribe B.”⁷ Thorlac Turville-Petre and Hoyt Duggan, too, have identified “considerable differences” between the languages of W and Hg-El, but their approach, say Horobin and Mooney, is vitiated both by their reliance on Samuels and by the probability that the spellings in question came from W’s exemplar, thus being part of his *passive repertoire*, those forms that are not in the range “he uses in writing that does not involve copying” but which “are nevertheless familiar in everyday usage as the forms of other writers, and which the scribe does not balk at reproducing.”⁸ Turville-Petre and Duggan mention this possibility but “do not pursue this,” say Horobin and Mooney, quoting those editors’ conclusion that if the W scribe “was indeed from the same workshop as the Hengwrt-Ellesmere scribe, then that workshop admitted considerable variety in spelling.”⁹ But Turville-Petre and Duggan cite as evidence against the “passive repertoire” explanation the fact that “the scribe of W was evidently a highly practised and professional scrivener with a remarkably consistent spelling system which he must have been taught to impose upon the language of his exemplars,” a conclusion Horobin and Mooney do not cite.¹⁰

This conflict is not really about passive repertoire, though. The conflict arises because Horobin and Mooney treat the spellings at issue as if they provided “an account of spoken usage, conducted through the medium of speech,” in which “the written contrast between pairs like *zet*: *yit* ‘yet’ is ‘merely orthographic’, in that it is not thought to imply any equivalent contrast in phonic substance,”¹¹ while Turville-Petre and Duggan follow the architects of the *Linguistic Atlas* in focusing precisely on such orthographic variants: “*mizt* and *might* must be regarded as graphemically different though they have at once the same meaning and the same phonemic equivalent,” both because the relationship between written and spoken Middle English is itself a vast and complicated topic and because graphological features play a role in mapping manuscripts’ dialects.¹² Horobin and Mooney’s chart, that is, conflates yogh with <y> and <gh>,¹³ while Turville-Petre and Duggan, like the *LALME* editors, distinguish those graphs.

I would suggest that the attribution of W to Scribe B necessitates not a variety of spellings itself, which would be expected, but a near-absolute split, not apparent in Horobin and Mooney’s treatment, in the usages of yogh, <gh>, and <y> in W, Hg, and El. Over the 960 sides of Hg and El their scribe wrote a total of three yoghs: a space-saving instance at line-end *thurz* before a decorated marginal paragraph sign in El’s *Parson’s Tale* (219r; Hg deficient), and two more in the manuscripts’ respective presentations of the rare term *veze*, “a blast, a rush,” in the *Knight’s Tale* line 1985

(Hg, fol. 27r; El, fol. 21v), both instances glossed *id est impetus*, indicating the term's foreignness to the scribe.¹⁴ W, by contrast, features no fewer than 1716 yoghs over its 294 sides, an absolute number 572 times greater than Hg-El's, and rate of density over 1900 times greater.¹⁵

The chart in Figure 7, which updates Horobin and Mooney's,¹⁶ offers a more comprehensive tally of the relevant terms, accounting for nearly half of Trinity B.15.17's usages of yogh. The main differences from theirs are my inclusion of B.15.17's text of Rolle's *Form of Living* and of a number of spellings absent from their chart, marked as "not in H/M"; a consistent policy regarding such terms like *although*, *throughout*, and *naught* (n., pron.), which are only sometimes included in their chart; and my indication of other relevant factors such as whether the usage appears primarily in prose texts or rhyme position.¹⁷

For nearly every item the discrepancies between Hg-El and W are substantial. Horobin and Mooney do not speak to the phenomenon at large, but do attempt to account for a few of these local differences. First, **AGAIN(ST)**, which in all three texts, they point out, appears spelled "with initial <ag-> and <ay->," suggesting to them that each was "constrained by the appearance of a particular form in his" exemplar.¹⁸ Be that as it may, the respective texts' treatment of the medial vowels is equally divergent, <ei> appearing in 89 percent of Trinity B.15.17's yet only 2 percent of Hg-El's forms. When the latter were constrained by their exemplars, as in the need for an <ey/ei> sound rather than <ay/ai> for rhyme (and in Hg's *Melibee*), B chose the <ey> spelling 84 percent of the time, while conversely the W scribe chose <ei> for 91 percent of these readings. As for **YET**, spelled *yet* by B unless constrained by rhyme, Horobin and Mooney point to the distribution of the *3it* variant in W, which, they say, "also suggests that it is a form that derives from the copy-text rather than the scribe's active repertoire, as twelve of the thirteen occurrences of this form are clustered in Passus 14–19, with a single occurrence in Passus 3."¹⁹ Such a hypothesis, though, could easily be reversed, the "cluster" of *yets* early in the poem, seven in Passus 5 alone, being taken as deriving from the exemplar. Whatever the case, other statistics suggest that usage and location in line, not the exemplar's spelling, were the relevant factors. Twenty-four of W's thirty-nine *yets* appear either as initial *Yet* (seven) or *And yet* (seventeen, two not initial), yet only two of the fourteen *3its* do so, both *And 3it* constructions. There are another six *Ac/ac yet* constructions, nearly all line-initial, but only one *Ac 3it*. Of the remaining appearances of this word unconstrained by such factors, the scribe slightly prefers the form found nowhere in Hg-El, *3it* (twelve), to *yet* (ten).

Item	Spelling	Hg (Hengwrt)	El (Ellesmere)	W (Trinity B.15.17)
AGAIN(ST)	agayn(s)	173	236	2
	ageyn(e)(s)	16	20	7
		all prose (<i>Mel</i>) or rhyme	19 in rhyme position	
	again(s)/(st)	1	3	0
	aycyn(s)	0	11	0
	aycin(s)	9	0	73
NOT / NAUGHT	nat	819	1050	9 Rolle
				5
	noght	234	190	1 Rolle (134r)
				2
	naught	11	11	1 Rolle (131r)
		not in H-M	not in H-M	0
	nawght	2	0	0
		not in H-M / both <i>Pars T</i>		
	naght	1	0	0
		not in H-M		
	no3t(e)	0	0	493
				159 Rolle
THOUGH	nou3t	0	0	14
	nau3t	0	0	7
	na3t	0	0	1
				26v; not in H-M
	thogh	187	71	0
	though	27	189	0
	theigh	7	0	0
	þou3 / Thou3	0	0	71
THROUGH	þei3 / Thei3	0	0	14
	þo3	0	0	1
				Rolle (146v)
	thurgh	122	151	0
	thur3	0	1	0
			not in H-M	
	þoru3 / Thoru3	0	0	181
	Thorgh	0	0	15 Rolle
SAW (pret.)	þorugh / Thorugh	0	0	1
				2
				1 Rolle (131v)
	saugh	31	124	0
	say	48	11	0
	saw(e)	44	5	1
				Rolle (133r)

Figure 7 Spellings of diagnostic terms containing **y**, **gh**, and yogh in Hg, El, and W.

Item	Spelling	Hg (Hengwrt)	El (Ellesmere)	W (Trinity B.15.17)
	sy	0	1 rhyme <i>CYT</i> , so not Hg	0
	seigh(e)	13	3	4
	sei3(e)	0	0	42
	sau3	0	0	7
				1 Rolle (134r)
YET	yet	239	294	40
				1 Rolle (140v)
	yit	8	5	0
		3 in rhyme position	3 in rhyme position	
	3it	0	0	14
				1 Rolle (141v)

Figure 7 (continued)

Horobin and Mooney cite W's seven appearances of **NOT** as *nau3t* as a "major disagreement" with Hg and El (the true major disagreement, of course, is that between Hg-El *nat* and W *no3t*), saying that it "looks suspiciously like a relict form, as is supported by its appearance as a minor variant in the Laud manuscript [Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud misc. 581, MS L], frequently in the same positions as in Trinity."²⁰ This does not stand up to scrutiny. For one, all seven of W's *nau3ts* are either the pronoun "naught, nothing" or adverb "not even, to no degree," both s.v. *MED* "naught," rather than the usual adverb s.v. "not." Also, only three of L's twenty-one *nau3t(e)* forms agree with W. And it is not true that this form "does not resemble any equivalent form in Hengwrt or Ellesmere": Hg and El between them read *naught* sixteen times, likewise as pronoun or intensive adverb as in W.²¹ Next, **THOUGH**: "In Trinity," the authors claim, "there are fourteen occurrences of the spelling 'pei3/Theigh' [*sic*] and these also appear to be inherited forms as they correlate exactly with the eleven occurrences of this form in the Laud manuscript, which otherwise prefers 'pou3.'"²² But only six of L's eleven forms have the yogh,²³ while W does not attest *Theigh*, all of its forms with medial <ei> featuring the yogh. In that term and **THROUGH**, Horobin and Mooney suggest that "we have evidence of changes in spelling preferences during Scribe B's copying career, and that he used Type II forms such as 'poru3/Thoru3' early in his career and subsequently rejected these in favor of the Type III forms

'thogh,' 'though,' and 'thurgh'."²⁴ Perhaps so, if the question at issue is begged, but as things stand this restates the problem. The same goes for the authors' identical appeal to "change in preferences" in what they present as the shift from *seiz/seigh* to *sauz/saugh* over the course of his copying career, W > Hg > El.²⁵

The risk of isolating these individual terms in sequence is that readers might be diverted from the pressing issue of how the same scribe could write 1716 yoghs in Trinity B.15.17 but only three over the course of Hg and El together. It is certainly true that the replacement of yogh was among the "typical changes in train" in the period 1400–20,²⁶ but B is alone among copyists of early *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts in not using this letter as part of his standard repertoire, and it features in the *Troilus* of Corpus 61 and elsewhere.²⁷ It is difficult to understand why a scribe would obliterate what had been a major form of his main repertoire between the copying of Trinity B.15.17 and Hengwrt. Given that all three texts are rather tolerant of differences in spelling – six different forms of NOT in Trinity, five in Hg-El – the case that they are by the same scribe needs to explain his near-absolute abandonment of a favored form within a relatively brief period of time.

If Horobin's identification of the Hg-El scribe (his Pynkhurst) as the main corrector to the *Piers Plowman* B text in BL Additional MS 35287 (sigil M) is accurate, the problem is even starker. For this corrector's "simplest" change, notes Turville-Petre, "and the most pervasive, is to remove or alter initial yogh."²⁸ Noting that none of the terms from which the corrector removed the yogh is spelled with that letter in W, he suggests that the corrector's purpose seems to have been "to alter the language of M in the direction of London English on the model of W."²⁹ Getting yogh right was clearly central to this mission. And yet this did not translate into the addition of yogh, or replacement of *-gh* or other letters with that graph: W has over 200 more yoghs than M after we account for the latter's deletions. If Pynkhurst is the Hg-El scribe, these three different approaches to yogh – writing them everywhere in W, deleting many but adding none to M in a partial attempt to render it W-like, and obliterating them from the graphetic system employed in Hg and El – are very difficult to reconcile with each other. If they are two separate scribes, though, then there is no problem to begin with, and the Hg-El scribe (if indeed he is the corrector) turned to M with only a local feature in mind as object of his corrections, one that accorded with his own approach to yogh, substantively different from Pynkhurst's in this regard.

Type III English

Trinity B.15.17's language, then, does not support, but rather counters, this text's attribution to the Hg-El scribe. In my judgment, all available evidence shows that Pynkhurst, scribe of Trinity B.15.17, could not have been the Hg-El scribe, and thus was not "Chaucer's scribe" either. This is not the only major fallout from my conclusion. The second part of Horobin and Mooney's title, the attribution's "Implications for London Standard English," signals the other field of endeavor in need of fresh attention. "While Samuels has attributed the similarity in the language of these manuscripts to a process of linguistic standardization," the authors write, "we will argue that the similar language found in the three manuscripts may be explained as that of a common scribe. Rather than representing evidence for a standard language, the language of these manuscripts is really a single scribal idiolect."³⁰ Horobin has elaborated this point as recently as 2016: "Such a conclusion [that B.15.17 is B's] has important implications for our understanding of linguistic standardization in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, suggesting that scribes continued to employ personal orthographic habits rather than beginning to observe external standards."³¹ The stakes are high, and the issue would become more complicated still in intervening years, so it is necessary to review the nature of this and subsequent claims about "standard" English.

In a major essay of 1963 M. L. Samuels identified four "types" of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English. Type I, represented by the majority of Wycliffite manuscripts (though not confined to them), is "based on the dialects of the Central Midland counties" and thus not of concern for this book, while Type IV, "Chancery Standard," is certainly London-based but too late for us, appearing around 1430.³² Type II, Samuels proposed, is typified by the Auchinleck Manuscript, and is probably London-based but is found almost solely in pre-1380 documents, while Type III, the "representative of London English of 1400," which he speculates was brought about by a wave of immigration into London from ca. 1380, is instantiated in 1) a number of documents in Chambers and Daunt's *Book of London English*, such as the Petition of the Folk of Mercerye, and in Furnivall's *Early English Wills*; 2) "the language of Chaucer" so far as that can be recovered, primarily Hg and El; 3) Trinity B.15.17's *Piers*; and 4) the holographs of Thomas Hoccleve.³³ Some of "the more obvious differences between Types II and III" are listed in the chart (Figure 8).³⁴

Type 11	Chaucer	Type 11	Chaucer
þat ilch(e), ich(e)	thilke, that ilk(e)	þerwhile(s) (þat)	whil
nouȝt, no	nat	-ande, -ende, -inde	-yng
eld(e)	old(e)	noȝer, noþer	neither
werld, warld	world	schuld	sholde
þai, hij	they	oȝain(s), aȝen	ageyns, ayeyns
þei(3)	though	wil	wol(e), wil(le)

Figure 8 More obvious differences between Types 11 and 111
London English (chart by M. L. Samuels).

Samuels's categorization of *El* and *W* as "Type 111" texts is not meant to imply that their spellings are identical but rather that they are close enough in substance to be seen as members of the same type of English. Other items from this chart in which *W* is clearly Type 111, its forms having been "thoroughly 'translated' into London English," include *þei* × 321 / *thei* × 21 / *they* × 16 versus *þai* zero and *hij* × 3 (all in alliterating position); *while* × 44 versus *þerwhile* zero; *neȝer* × 44 versus *noȝer* zero; and so forth.³⁵ The value of this information is limited given that "much of [Langland's] language accords with London English of his time,"³⁶ but the existence of "few obvious relict forms" – *heo* for SHE twice and *hij* for THEY three times as just discussed; "occasional spelling <u> for OE /y/ and /y:/ in words such as *fuyr*, *fust*, *hulles*, *huyre*"; "retention of rounding for OE /eo/ and /ēo/ in a few words," such as *bu(y)rn*, *leode*, and *heo*; and the "ending <-ep> of the present indicative plural" – shows just how thorough was the "translation" into Type 111 London English.³⁷ We are now in a position to see that, since Trinity B.15.17's language on the whole attests Type 111 London English and since its scribe, whom I identify as Adam Pynkhurst, did not copy Hengwrt and Ellesmere, the argument that Type 111 attests a single scribe's idiolect, the major implication of Horobin and Mooney's essay (other than its subsequent role in the Pynkhurst identification), does not hold up.

Neither, I will now argue, does another of Horobin's important critiques of Samuels's category of Type 111 English, though this time the problems do not pertain to Trinity B.15.17. Having found a single scribe where Samuels found many, Horobin now, conversely, finds multiplicity, in the form of "structured variation" and "scribes switching between variant usages" as opposed to "being required to conform to an external norm" to be found in "a single, standardized form of London English" emerging in the period 1380–1430.³⁸ Phrases like *required to conform* (who was supposed to do the requiring?) and *single*, though, do not accurately reflect

the situation. Samuels insisted that Type III was characterized by a “heterogeneity of orthography that contrasts strikingly with the comparatively uniform spelling system of Type I,” that “no strict norm can yet have existed” over this half-century, and that “any form of written standard is conspicuous by its absence. (Perhaps the nearest to it is the type of spelling that is found in both the Ellesmere MS and in Trinity College Cambridge 353 (B.15.17) of the B-text of *Piers Plowman*.)”³⁹ He later wrote that “there was no standardisation in London” to any substantial degree “until the emergence, ca. 1430, of what I have termed Chancery Standard, or Type IV,” which arose “from the competing and changing fashions in spelling” in the era 1400–20 “that the new written standard was to evolve.”⁴⁰ Such remarks seem to me to articulate beliefs opposite to the ones Horobin attributes to their author.

What is “even more striking for our understanding of the tolerance of linguistic variation in this period” than Horobin and Mooney’s claim that Scribe B was Pynkhurst, writes Horobin,

is Mooney’s further proposal that Pinkhurst was responsible for copying another Type III document: the petition of the Mercers’ Company, written in 1387/8. While this document shares some similarities with other Type III texts, there are a number of striking differences between its language and the preferred forms used by Pinkhurst when copying Chaucer in the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts.⁴¹

This proposal, which Horobin’s sometime collaborator Jeremy Smith has called “highly significant,”⁴² “demonstrates the potential such identifications have for enabling us to build up a sense of a scribe’s inventory of forms, or his range of repertoires, from which he can select, depending upon the text he is copying, its genre and its function,” remarks Horobin,⁴³ concluding with his comments on Samuels’s supposed belief that Type III was a unified English to which scribes were required to conform. Horobin lists a few of the major differences between the petition and Hg-El, but does not include the Trinity *Piers*. The addition of that text, and of a few other diagnostic forms, yields another table (Figure 9).⁴⁴

While all of these spellings are securely “Type III,” there is no pattern to their equivalences and variations. Sometimes all three texts agree substantively (MUCH, TOGETHER), sometimes they all contradict each other (WHETHER, NOT, THROUGH), and sometimes the Mercers and *Piers* align against Hg-El (AGAINST), or *Piers* and Hg-El against the Mercers (SUCH, IF, -LY), or the Mercers and Hg-El against *Piers* (SINCE).

This situation invites four possible interpretations. First would be that a single scribe copied each text absolutely faithfully, which would throw

Item	Mercers' Petition	Trinity B.15.17	Hengwrt-Ellesmere
SUCH	such ((swich))	swich	swich
MUCH	muche	muche	muche(l)
AGAINST	ayein(s)	ayeins	agayns
WHETHER	whether	wheȳer (wher)	wheither (wher)
NOT	nought	no(u)ȝt	nat/noght
THROUGH	thourgh	þoruȝ	thurgh
IF	yif	if	if
TOGETHER	togydre/togidre	togid(e)re(s)	togidre(s)
-LY	-lich	-ly (-liche)	-ly ((-liche))
SINCE	sithen	siþ / siþen	sithen

Figure 9 Diagnostic terms in three texts Horobin and Mooney attribute to Scribe B.

into disarray much of the evidence discussed in this chapter, whether it be that Pynkhurst was Scribe B or that scribes called upon a repertoire of forms depending on the function of the text. Second, the evidence for Horobin's argument that scribes had a variety of forms might appear all the stronger – except that the random nature of the agreements makes it difficult to assent to his suggestion that a single scribe treated poetry and parliamentary documents differently. Third would be that Pynkhurst wrote all this but that his methods are inscrutable: he changed or did not change his forms over time, sometimes reverting to an earlier form but sometimes not, for no rhyme or reason. Neither Horobin's argument nor anything else could help us if such is the case. The fourth option might seem the most obvious: that the Mercers' petition is not in the hand of either the Trinity *Piers* or the *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts. This would certainly make better sense of the evidence of Trinity B.15.17, whose scribe exhibits that “remarkably consistent spelling system which he must have been taught to impose upon the language of his exemplars,” a judgment that sits uneasily with Horobin's remark, brought about solely by this attribution, that “it is very difficult to determine what his personal linguistic habits were” on account of the “striking differences” among his various texts.⁴⁵ It might be tempting to protect the Mercers' attribution by dropping the *Piers*, were it not the glue that binds Pynkhurst to Hg and El. The consistency of Pynkhurst's spelling system “supported” his identification as Scribe B, in turn enabling the addition of the Mercers' petition to his hand, in turn necessitating the opposite conclusion, that is, that his spelling was inconsistent. The fourth option would provide a way out

of this hopeless dilemma: to test the attribution against the orthographic evidence rather than accepting it at face value and rewriting the history of Middle English language and scribal behavior.

I follow Roberts in seeing no evidence that Pynkhurst copied the Mercers' petition, despite his work for John Organ on the Mercers' accounts, but does his separation from B leave open the possibility that the latter was its copyist?⁴⁶ Mooney, after remarking that the hand that wrote this document "shares many characteristics with that of Adam Pinkhurst and seems very likely to be his," turns immediately to a full explanation of this petition's context and import, which relies on the accuracy of the previously cautious identification:

Given that they at least knew one another, it may be significant that the scribe who was in all likelihood already making copies of Chaucer's works by 1387 was also writing on behalf of a guild firmly opposed to Brembre. Put another way, Chaucer's ties with the scribe Adam Pinkhurst from at least 1385 onwards may also suggest Chaucer's closer proximity to these political events than has been deduced from the life records or from his writings⁴⁷

and so forth. By its next mention, all signs of caution are gone and this confidence in the identification has become absolute: "Having identified the Mercers' petition scribe as Adam Pinkhurst, we now know that he was working as a writer of court letter in London at this time."⁴⁸ Yet that identification has in fact not occurred by this point in the essay. What I have here printed is its entirety in the main text to then. Likewise the Appendix's description of the Mercers' petition's hand takes the accuracy of the identification as a given: "The Mercers' petition is the earliest datable piece of Pinkhurst's handwriting (though the *Boece* fragment, Peniarth 393 D, may predate it). In aspect it most resembles the Hengwrt manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales*, an Anglicana formata both rounded and vertical," it asserts, citing what are claimed to be diagnostic letter forms: **w** in a top line with arching approach strokes, rounded **e** only terminally, long **r** descending only slightly below the line, Anglicana **a** taller than minim height, extended ascenders in top lines and with angular hooks when of normal height, **y** often dotted.⁴⁹ As we saw in [Chapter 2](#), though, these characteristics of Scribe B's hand are not unique to it, even in this combination.

This is not to say that the attribution is necessarily wrong, but that it has not been firmly established. Declarative statements to the effect that "Mooney's research has established that Adam Pinkhurst ... penned the politically contentious Mercers' Petition" exaggerate the reality.⁵⁰ We need to start anew.

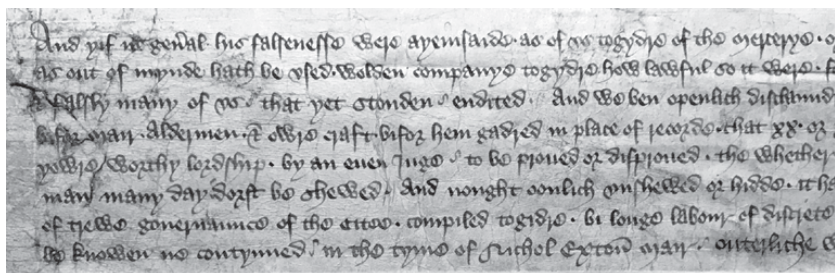


Figure 10 Petition of the Folk of Mercerye, identified by Linne Mooney as hand of Scribe B (= Pynkhurst). Kew, The National Archives, SC 8/20/997.

A glance at [Figure 10](#), or consultation of the reproduction available for download from the National Archives, quickly explains both the “huge excitement” that was Roberts’s initial reaction on looking at this – “a hand spot-on for comparison with the scribe of the Ellesmere manuscript” – and the reason she “remain[s] unconvinced” that it is Scribe B’s.⁵¹ For the generic qualities listed by Mooney’s description are balanced by substantial differences between the two. Roberts nicely describes the grade and aspect of the petition:

Overall, the script of the Mercers’ petition is Anglicana because the letter forms point that way, with Secretary **a** occurring infrequently alongside the more general looped Anglicana form ... There are no other Secretary features. In grade the script is more media than formata: it is relatively current. The pen is not lifted between minims, for example, and the cross-bar of **t** sometimes moves into the making of the following **h** [see [the line 1 Fig. 10](#)]. The comparative frequency of final round **e** (double in ‘Citee’ [see penultimate line [Fig. 10](#)]) accords with the media grade. In aspect it runs freely, with words set well apart and letters uncramped.⁵²

But this description does not match the hand of Hg and El. Mooney “runs through perceived similarities in support of her identification” of the petition with B, “but without attempting to address the possibility of difference. Some of the differences may result from the less formal quality of the hand in” the petition as just described and in its preponderance of sigma terminal **-s** forms. “Overall, however,” as Roberts sums up, “the Mercers’ petition is more upright, and the letter forms appear more rounded” than the items assigned to Pynkhurst.⁵³

The aspect of Hg and El, by contrast to that of the petition, is not current, its minims are formed, and its words are close together in both verse and prose, with a “prevalent rightward slant of the vertical penstrokes,”⁵⁴ all

of which is clear from a comparison of the petition's phrases with their equivalents in Hg and El. The term *poyntes* in the Mercers' petition alone (para. 6, line 6 final term) diverges from Hg-El's *pointes* (Hg 170r line 7 from bottom / El 189v line 14 from bottom) not just in using **y** for **i**, but also in length of descender on **p**, current as opposed to set formation of minims, **t** with curved stalk that does not ascend above cross-bar versus tall straight stalk, and final sigma-shaped **s**, used invariably in this text (e.g., *his* final row), as opposed to the "use of an unusually large final 8-shaped **s**" that is "again a distinguishing feature" of Scribe B.⁵⁵ Its *companye* (Fig. 10 line 2) and *grocchyng* (para. 5 line 2) reveal differences in spelling – Hg and El, *compaignye* and *grucchyng* (2r / 1r, line 24 main text; 63r line 10 / 67r line 38) – and in the ducts of **y** and **g** in the formation of tails, the scribe of the Mercers' petition consistently bringing the tails of **y** up sharply and of **h** downward, in thin and often long lines, where the Hg-El scribe flattens his nib to make thick tails as they gently curve up, that of **y** sometimes heading parallel under the base, with an occasional tick just to the left of the stalk. The respective presentations of *conseille* (para. 6 line 1) and *his falsenesse* (Fig. 10 line 1; *conseil* Hg 40v line 3 from bottom / El 33v line 6; *of his falschede nas his* El 196v line 9 from bottom) show that the Mercers' petition's **l** graphs form a loop from bottom right, where Hg's and El's forms come to an angle from higher up. And the item of punctuation Mooney cites as a similarity is in fact another difference: Pynkhurst "writes the same unusually heightened and curved *punctus elevatus*" as found occasionally in the petition "as in the Hatfield fragment," she says, but the form without the point is much more pervasive in the Mercers' petition than in Hg or El, and as Roberts points out the *punctus* form in the petition "is by far more cursive" than B's.⁵⁶

Whether these substantial differences in spelling, aspect, and letter forms are enough to disattribute the Mercers' petition from Scribe B will be up to the reader to decide.⁵⁷ At the least it seems reasonable to wonder at the grounds for accepting the attribution, given that the similarities Mooney cites are quite generic. Her original claim that the petition merely "seems very likely to be his" had been forgotten within a few pages, by which point Pynkhurst had been "identified" as the Mercers' scribe. That the Appendix to "Chaucer's Scribe" does not argue that the petition is B's but instead assumes the identification as a given did not help matters. Neither did the separate identification of Pynkhurst's hand in the Mercers' Accounts (see Chapter 2). As a result, Middle English studies is now the site of histories of scribal behavior, the development of London English, and Chaucer's relationship with London City politics radically revised

from those of the pre-2006 era.⁵⁸ The first two of these categories, at the least, could have acted as a check on the attribution.

Historical Linguistics and the Rationale of Middle English Copy-Text

If my arguments are accurate, the existence of Type III English does indeed hold up. This re-establishment of Samuels's analysis extends beyond the topic of the development of English in quite practical ways. Indeed what is at stake is no less than the language in which all critics and readers of *Piers Plowman* B encounter that text – what, for all intents and purposes, they take to *be* that text. If scholars of Middle English dialectology have been willing to alter the course of their field on the grounds of Linne Mooney's claims, they have exhibited no such reticence when it comes to critical editing, at least when the issue is George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson's choice of W as copy-text for their Athlone edition of that poem, perhaps the most contested editorial project in Middle English studies. John Bowers, Samuels, Horobin and Mooney, and John Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre have all called that choice into question, from slightly different vantage points. This set of critiques is worth attending to not so much for their particular claims as for the broader implications to which they point, which have the potential, I will here suggest, to wipe away a long-simmering and in its current terms irresolvable feud about our relationships with Middle English texts, whether as scholars, readers, or teachers.

"The ideal basic manuscript or copy-text," write Kane and Donaldson, "is the one which first provides the closest dialectal and chronological approximation to the poet's language, and then second, most accurately reflects his original in substantive readings."⁵⁹ They stress the primacy of the first of these purposes, with appropriate reference to the classic essay "The Rationale of Copy-Text," in which W. W. Greg drew

a distinction between the significant, or as I shall call them "substantive", readings of the text, those namely that affect the author's meaning or the essence of his expression, and others, such in general as spelling, punctuation, word-division, and the like, affecting mainly its formal presentation, which may be regarded as the accidents, or as I shall call them "accidentals", of the text.⁶⁰

Greg argued "that the copy-text should govern (generally) in the matter of accidentals, but that the choice between substantive readings belongs to the general theory of textual criticism and lies altogether beyond the

narrow principle of the copy-text.”⁶¹ Kane and Donaldson were happy to take on this latter burden of textual criticism, that is, choosing the best reading from all manuscripts or, often, from their own judgment, but of course they needed to print these readings in a particular form, hence the appropriateness of copy-text theory for their purposes. This editorial vigor meant that they needed a text that would “afford a clear model for the many readings that have to be introduced into the text by emendation,” another of the uses Greg identifies as the role of copy-text.⁶²

It is important to remember that the editors were not following “the classical theory of the ‘best’ or ‘most authoritative’ manuscript, whether it be held in a reasonable or in an obviously fallacious form,” which, as Greg remarks, “has really nothing to do with the English theory of ‘copy-text’ at all.”⁶³ Confusion on this issue is pervasive, a recent major introduction to Middle English textual studies, for instance, describing as “[t]he hall-mark” of the Athlone editions “their choice of a ‘best text’ as a base text, collated against all the other surviving manuscripts ... and freely emended according to the editor’s own sense of alliterative meter and discourse.”⁶⁴ A failure to adhere strictly to this distinction might lie behind some of the critiques leveled at the approach taken by Kane and Donaldson, which I will now summarize.

Those editors identify three candidates as copy-text for an edition of *Piers Plowman* B, excluding one of them, Cambridge, Newnham College MS 4 (Y), for being “markedly more corrupt and thus farthest of the three from the archetype,” leaving only W and L, Laud misc. 581 (referred to above), which Skeat had printed and indeed taken to be a holograph. “In favour of L there would be the single consideration of its superior originality,” they write: “W has about 150 more group errors, and also more individual errors, than L. But W is recommended by two features probably connected with its being earlier than L: the exceptional consistency of its spelling, and the conformity of its grammar with ‘standard’ late fourteenth-century usage as this is instanced in the best known manuscripts of Chaucer and Gower.”⁶⁵ W’s consistency provided the necessary model for emendation, and the editors observed its superiority to L especially in “the more essential points of grammar,” such as:

distinction between the weak and the strong position of the adjective (-e/zero); between the preterite singular (first and third) of strong verbs and that of weak verbs with only one syllable before the preterite suffix (zero/-e); between the past participles of strong and weak verbs (-e(n)/zero); between adjectival -lich and adverbial -liche; and between nouns and adjectives with inherited final -e and those without it.⁶⁶

They conclude with an appeal to populism: "in default of any evidence about the original dialect of the poem, or about Langland's capacity to spell and to write grammatically, the form most appropriate for its presentation must be the one which will least distract or mislead its readers. If that form also ... makes *Piers Plowman* more accessible to the reader this is no more than the poem deserves."⁶⁷

On its own terms this appears unassailable, and indeed the critiques it has attracted over the past few decades are based in large part on a shifting of those terms, whether by appealing to more recent discoveries regarding Langland's dialect or by implicitly rejecting, if not actively failing to understand, copy-text theory. The most high-profile and influential critique comes from Horobin and Mooney: "On the basis of Trinity's use of standard London English, Kane and Donaldson rejected as a base text the manuscript used by Skeat as the base for his edition of the B-text, Bodleian, Laud misc. 581, despite the recognition that the Laud manuscript presents a textually much superior version of the text."⁶⁸ Likewise Burrow and Turville-Petre: "Kane-Donaldson, followed by Schmidt, based themselves on W, while admitting that it had more errors than L."⁶⁹ Leaving aside the facts that L's "superiority" to W was established by Kane and Donaldson themselves, who confronted the situation head-on, we might note two other mitigating circumstances. First is that Greg, immediately after expounding his theory that copy-text should govern in matters of accidentals, warns precisely against the assumptions at work here, in a passage quoted by the Athlone editors:

Thus it may happen that in a critical edition the text rightly chosen as copy may not by any means be the one that supplies most substantive readings in cases of variation. The failure to make this distinction and to apply this principle has naturally led to too close and too general a reliance upon the text chosen as basis for an edition, and there has arisen what may be called the tyranny of the copy-text, a tyranny that has, in my opinion, vitiated much of the best editorial work of the past generation.⁷⁰

Second, Horobin and Mooney are wrong to say that Kane and Donaldson "recognized" that L "presents a textually much superior version of the text"; on the contrary, the editors endorse the view "that W is only 'slightly inferior' to L," since "W's relatively larger number of errors seems proportionally insignificant in terms of the very numerous corrections necessitated in any basic text by the corruption of the archetypal B text."⁷¹

Horobin and Mooney continue by attributing to Kane and Donaldson the "implication ... that the consistent use of a standard language found in the best manuscripts of the major Middle English poets such as Gower

and Chaucer lends authority to the Trinity manuscript.”⁷² They do not explain what they mean by “lends authority,” but unless this is another way of saying that the editors will adopt W’s language – will, that is, use it as copy-text – this charge, again, is inaccurate. Greg insists that the editor who refuses to choose between competing substantive readings, but instead “falls back on some arbitrary canon, such as the authority of the copy-text, is in fact abdicating his editorial function,” a tenet at the heart of the Athlone enterprise: “no single manuscript can have more authority than any other,” write Kane and Donaldson, “since all are corrupted in similar ways and differ only in the degree of their identifiable corruption.”⁷³ Indeed many critics took this refusal to invest any manuscript at all with “authority” to be the most scandalous aspect of this controversial edition.⁷⁴ “We have seen that the evidence for the existence of the authoritative standard language appealed to by Kane and Donaldson,” continue Horobin and Mooney (again, “authoritative” is their term, not the editors’), “is dubious, and thus so is its use as a criterion for selection of the Trinity manuscript as base in preference to the Laud manuscript.”⁷⁵ Again, however, the evidence for the existence of Type III – a less leading term than “authoritative standard language” – is quite strong. Finally, following John Bowers and anticipating Burrow and Turville-Petre, the authors fault Kane and Donaldson for choosing a text not in the poet’s dialect,⁷⁶ a charge that ought to be weighed against the editors’ own claim to be working “in default of any evidence about the original dialect of the poem” (see text at [note 67](#)).

It was in fact M. L. Samuels, in an essay I have never seen cited in this context, who offered the most interesting critique of Kane and Donaldson’s choice of W on linguistic grounds. He believed it “inherently probable that texts showing the closest incidental connection with the archetype will also be the most substantively reliable,” which as it happens is the situation with *Piers B*, in which L and Rawlinson 38 (R) have both the fewest substantive errors and most relict forms of their respective families, beta and alpha.⁷⁷ The problem, though, is that W is much superior to those two in its treatment of final *-e* (see above, [note 66](#)), which, one would imagine, might well have led Kane and Donaldson to prefer it even if they had known Langland’s dialect and its relatively more faithful preservation in L and R. Samuels responds, though, that this would have been mistaken: the distribution of final *-e* in manuscript traditions “only rarely follows the pattern for relict preservation of other linguistic features, but is simply that which happens to have been imposed by the uppermost or most recent scribes. It is therefore purely by chance that it happens to be deficient in

the Laud and Rawlinson manuscripts, and this casts no reflection on the status of those two manuscripts." Hence his conclusion "that an editor's best evidence for the B-text would be the Laud and Rawlinson manuscripts plus a reconstruction of final *-e* according to these principles."⁷⁸

As a statement of where to find the spelling and grammatical forms he considers closest to Langland's, this might be fine, even if it ignores Kane and Donaldson's impassioned defense of W on the grounds that, whatever the nature of Langland's dialect, it presents the poem in a way that twentieth-century readers will find accessible. That issue aside, though, Samuels's comments make for a muddle with regard to the question of copy-text. Kane and Donaldson needed a single, complete manuscript, yet he seems to propose instead three, one manifestly deficient and thus ineligible (R), another W itself (unless there is another source for this "reconstruction" of grammar), and the third, L, the one the editors rejected precisely for the reason that Samuels himself needs to include W, its faulty grammar. But this muddle arises because Samuels's real topic is not copy-text at all, but the sources of *Piers Plowman* B's *substantives*. Yes, Greg includes spelling among the "accidentals" that do not affect the author's meaning: whether first-person singular is *I* or *Y*, the narrator falls asleep in a *somer seson* or *somur sesoun*, or does so on a *May mornyng* or *morwenynge* hardly affects the reader's comprehension. But some spellings are crucial to sense. At B.9.148, for instance, where WOC²CBM read "The gospel is *herayein* in o degre, I fynde," Kane and Donaldson are forced to emend to *hera[g]ein* to preserve alliteration. They do so here and at four other readings precisely because spelling is not "accidental" when it affects alliteration.⁷⁹

This applies no less to the status of <e>, the schwa sound, primarily with regard to final *-e*. Samuels's proposal makes sense only from such a perspective, and is a testament to the power of the notion that, since copy-text pertains to matters of grammar, final *-e* falls under its purview. In fact Greg does not mention grammar in "The Rationale for Copy-Text," and <e> falls under the rubric of copy-text because of the accident, as it were, that in Middle English so many grammatical features are actually, or also, features of spelling. This of course is why its consistent and accurate usage in W matters so much to Kane and Donaldson, and why Samuels enjoins editors to reconstruct final *-e* despite its inconsistent treatment by or absence from the grammars of L and R. This is not at all the same as the choice between *somer* and *somur*, in large part precisely because the spelling in this case concerns grammar, and because grammar is "þe ground of al" as Anima has it (B.xv.372).

It is up to editors and historical linguists to decide whether Langland always strictly adhered to the principle that the b-verse must have only one long dip before or after the third lift, whether his lines always have feminine endings, whether words whose spellings might not indicate their disyllabic status should necessarily be emended (such as line-ending *all* if it should be pronounced *alle*), or even whether MS W accurately records Langland's use of final *-e*.⁸⁰ My point is more straightforward: that Samuels was quite right to exempt historical <e> from the question of copy-text, even if he seems not to have realized the character of his complaint. Historical <e>, like alliteration, is a matter of substantives, leaving spellings like *Y* or *I*, *somur* or *somer*, and the like to be the sole subjects of copy-text.⁸¹ If this is accepted then it will follow that debates over the critical editing of *Piers Plowman* will be at the least much more firmly grounded than has been the case with regard to the choice of W as Kane and Donaldson's copy-text. Perhaps the result will even be critical editions of the A and B versions that present their texts in their author's dialect.⁸²

My aim, though, is not so much to advocate for a new edition, or to urge critics to cite Langland in a particular way, as to show that such situations are matters of judgment, in which certain spellings are rightly taken to be substantive not accidental, but in which historical linguistics, while crucial to the case, does not work alone. That discipline neither provides the evidence for B's identification as Adam Pynkhurst to compensate for the weakness of the paleographical case, nor undermines Samuels's categorization of Type III English, nor retroactively reveals Kane and Donaldson's choice of copy-text to have been fallacious. What historical linguistics does show is that Trinity B.15.17 is not in Scribe B's hand, that Type III English stands as a viable descriptive category (if not as a "standard"), that the Mercers' petition is not in B's hand either, and, not least, that Greg's theory of copy-text just does not apply where alliteration or especially final *-e* is at issue, which is to say, in Middle English poetry at large. Such issues will occupy us on a few occasions over the following chapters; but first we turn to a scribe known to have copied both Chaucer and Langland and much else besides, the quest for whom brings before our eyes figures ranging from Thomas Usk to the women of Newgate prison to the great poet's own son Thomas Chaucer.

Looking for the Scribe of Huntington Hm 114

The scribe of San Marino, Huntington Library MS Hm 114 has always exerted a greater pull on critical attention than has Scribe B or even Adam Pynkhurst. The motives and effects of that manuscript's mammoth *Piers Plowman*, compiled from all three versions, with updated language and new Latin lines;¹ the "compilational poetics" manifest in the "variety and combination of responses to Middle English texts which he exemplifies" in both Hm 114 (*Piers*, *Mandeville's Travels*, Chaucer's *Troilus*, etc.) and his other major compilation, London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 491 (prose *Brut*, *The Siege of Jerusalem*, *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, etc.);² the status of the *Troilus* texts of Hm 114 and its earlier, abandoned sibling, BL MS Harley 3943, particularly the possibility that they witness to an early stage of Chaucerian composition;³ these are only some of the major topics treated over the decades. The most influential recent claim about this scribe, though, has been Linne Mooney and Estelle Stubbs's of 2013, that he was one Richard Osborn, clerk to the chamberlain, and thus one of the most senior officers of the London Guildhall, from 1400 to 1437, a claim on which Helen Killick has built by identifying a petition of 1425 in his hand that suggests his possible affinities with the Lollards.⁴

If accurate, this identification upends the prevailing sense of scribes as the workhorses of the literary industry. Pynkhurst might have been rich, but by the time he copied *Piers*, scribal work was his whole focus. Richard Osborn, by contrast, had enormous responsibilities in the city. Between 1395 and 1400 Osborn and four other senior aldermen and City officials were involved in establishing the Blackwell Hall market, just to the east of Guildhall yard (where the Guildhall Art Gallery now stands), which became an important woolen cloth market, and in 1400, following its successful launch, Osborn was granted by the mayor and commonalty two shops and an adjacent vacant plot on which a house was to be built at the City's expense and which he was to rent at 40s a year.⁵ He was therefore already very well connected and rewarded by the time he took

on his position as clerk of the chamberlain in that year. His immediate supervisor, the chamberlain himself, was the City of London's chief financial officer, and joined the common clerk, archiver and keeper of the City's legal records, as the two most senior elected positions in the Guildhall. Osborn, who worked very closely with both these men, was primarily responsible for preparing the City's accounts, and took on such tasks as "organizing street cleaning, levying and disbursing money, attending the court of aldermen, acting as clerk to city committees, joining deputations sent to the king, or acting as an arbiter or executor," in Caroline Barron's summary.⁶ He was richly rewarded for his efforts, and upon his retirement was granted the title of the house the City had built for him plus an annual robe and pension of £6 13s 4d.⁷

In placing the scribe of Hm 114 in the Guildhall, Mooney and Stubbs follow up on A. I. Doyle's discovery of his hand in two productions of that institution: Letter Book I, the "general record of business relating to the city, the Court of Aldermen and, in due course, the Common Council" for the years 1400–22, and the *Liber Albus*, compiled by the common clerk John Carpenter, among those customals that "are more or less (generally less) well-organised compilations of city regulations with accompanying exemplars."⁸ But the handful of new items Mooney and Stubbs attribute to him, especially a few entries retrospectively entered (*"Postea"*) into Letter Book H (predecessor to Letter Book I) regarding the City's orphans, they say, constitute "quite conclusive evidence of his identity as Richard Osborn" rather than, as Doyle's findings might have suggested, a mere junior Guildhall clerk.⁹ Their book *Scribes and the City* argues that Osborn, John Marchaunt (their Scribe D), John Carpenter (scribe of Chaucer and Gower, they say), and none other than Adam Pynkhurst "attached themselves to – or possibly influenced – that faction of London politics, supported by John of Gaunt and his son Henry of Derby, that had recognized the usefulness of the English vernacular in winning the commons to its cause(s), just as the Lancastrians would do leading up to and after their rise to kingship."¹⁰ This bold conclusion is built on the proposal that Osborn's literary writing "coincides with plans for the new Guildhall library," and that it thus "offers the clearest evidence we have for a personal interest in Middle English literary texts among the highest officers of the Guildhall."¹¹

In 2015 I wrote that, despite my rejection of Pynkhurst's identification as the Hengwrt-Ellesmere scribe, the identifications of Osborn as the Hm 114 scribe and Marchaunt as Scribe D seemed well founded.¹² This and the following chapter argue that the grounds for my confidence were not

as strong as I then believed. Osborn takes up his role in *Scribes and the City* as the result of misrepresentations of the claim's supporting scholarship and a very partial account of the scribe's output. That book's thesis relies heavily on the Hm 114 scribe's status as a senior clerk, able to shape the policies of the Guildhall and indeed of England's incipient vernacularism itself, but a more complete conspectus of the evidence points in the opposite direction. My negative argument is necessary, given the central roles of *Scribes and the City* in Middle English scholarship and of Osborn in that book's argument. But more important is this chapter's substantial body of new attributions to the Hm 114 scribe, in documents produced from 1397 through 1432. After at least two stints as junior Guildhall clerk, 1403–10 and 1417–20, it was in the Goldsmiths' Company that this clerk took the step from the institutional to the literary. The clerk who copied all this material was responsible for perhaps the greatest, in both quality and quantity, recording and preservation of lives and beliefs of the men and women of medieval England and beyond.

Richard Osborn, Literary Scribe?

"It seems remarkable that this important preserver and disseminator of Middle English texts could be identical with such an important and busy officer of the Guildhall as Richard Osborn, an attorney in the Husting courts in the 1390s and clerk of the chamber for the City of London from 1400 until 1437," Mooney and Stubbs write, "but there is very strong evidence for this identification," evidence that within ten pages they characterize as "quite conclusive."¹³ The authors first point to the circumstances of the production of the *Liber Albus* and Goldsmiths' Register. "The contents of the *Liber Albus* demonstrate an intimate knowledge of the older customs and records of the city, access to which was limited to a few officers of the civic secretariat," who by Carpenter's time were the chamberlain and common clerk. Mooney and Stubbs cite Barron as writing that anyone "who wished to consult the records had to ask permission of either the chamberlain or the common clerk; if the request seemed reasonable then the chamber clerk would show him the records and provide a copy as required, for a fee," which they thus gloss:

The chamberlain was chosen from the members of the city's more important guilds, and by the end of the fourteenth century would not have been expected to do clerical work; for such tasks the clerk of the chamber, also called the controller, would be called upon. To have had such access to the city's archives as to be able to index and contribute to the *Liber Albus*, the HM

114 Scribe must, then, have been either the chamber clerk or the common clerk of the city.¹⁴

The only candidates proposed for such a scenario in 1419 are Osborn and John Carpenter; yet since the latter wrote the preface to the *Liber Albus* in a hand clearly different from the one under discussion, the Hm 114 scribe, they claim, “must be the chamber clerk, Richard Osborn.”¹⁵

We should probably take the account offered here, based on Carpenter’s depiction, with a grain of salt, since he had a vested interest in bolstering the seeming importance of the Guildhall’s senior clerks. If it is factually accurate, then things had changed over the previous century, given that “Andrew Horn, who became chamberlain in 1320, was already familiar with the city’s records and compiled his famous custumal *Liber Horn* in 1311 *before* he became chamberlain.”¹⁶ This discrepancy might as easily, though, be attributed to Carpenter’s idealization of London’s record-keepers. Mooney and Stubbs’s reliance on the former approach to that specific topic might be justifiable, but things begin to go awry in their attribution to Barron of the statement that “the chamber clerk” would show the records to a reasonable applicant for access. What she actually writes is that “a chamber clerk” would do so, a paraphrase of the *Liber Albus*’s original: “si il semble al Chaumbirleyn ou al Commune Clerk resonable, soit a luy monstrez per *un clerk*, jurrez a la Chaumbre, et nemye autrement”: “a clerk, sworn to the Chamber.”¹⁷ By “chamber clerk” Barron, following Carpenter, is not denoting a position, such as *Chaumbirleyn* and *Commune Clerk*, held by Osborn, as Mooney and Stubbs assume. She is rather citing a generic role of which Osborn’s particular status as *le clerk du Chaumbirleyn*, as Carpenter calls its holder in the following paragraph – his first and last mention of the position, on a folio Mooney and Stubbs reproduce in a later chapter (as do I: Fig. 17 below) – is one of a handful.¹⁸ The identification of Richard Osborn as the Hm 114 scribe is based on the acceptance of an interested account at face value, which just might be valid, but also on the mistaking of an indefinite article as the definite, a much more serious problem. The authentic account makes more sense, too, in that it assigns this menial work to junior clerks rather than to the clerk of the chamberlain.¹⁹

“Further evidence that the HM 114 Scribe must be an important officer of the Guildhall,” say Mooney and Stubbs, inheres in their identification of his hand in the Goldsmiths’ Company Register of Deeds and Charters, *terminus a quo* 1418.²⁰ They place the production of this volume not in the Goldsmiths’ Hall, as one might have expected from its title and contents, but in the Guildhall:

The Goldsmiths had commissioned this volume recording their landed possessions because, as they record in the memorandum at the beginning of the Register, valuable items such as charters had been “embesylez et detraez” (embezzled and removed) from the Company. The same memorandum goes on to record that for the missing material they had had to resort to the Guildhall, where copies of their original documents were held. As we have just noted, permission to copy would have been given by the chamberlain or common clerk and the copying itself would have been the task of the common clerk or the clerk of the chamber. In 1418, when the Register was prepared, the clerk of the chamber was Richard Osbarn.²¹

Taken as a whole, though, the relevant material shows that the Goldsmiths’ Register could not have been produced by a Guildhall clerk. One factual error in this account, if not of great consequence, concerns the location of this memorandum about “embezzlement,” which could refer either to the fraudulent destruction or mutilation of the charters in question.²² Mooney and Stubbs direct their readers to their reproduction of folio 1r, written in Latin in the Hm 114 scribe’s hand, yet the French text cited here is rather, as their footnote correctly indicates, from an entry of 1418 in the *Wardens’ Accounts* which I am about to quote.

Neither the full text of that memorandum nor the Register of Deeds itself leaves room for Mooney and Stubbs’s scenario. It is unclear how they imagine Osbarn getting hold, or knowing the identity, of the missing Goldsmiths’ documents, but they certainly have him using the recovered originals in the Guildhall as exemplars for his entering of their texts into the Goldsmiths’ Register. The passage from which they quote, however, says that in 1418,

there was ordained and written up and placed in the treasury a book of vellum containing 400 leaves plus the guardleaves, i.e. four at the beginning and four at the end, the which book was ordained for the use and the benefit of all the Company; and because in former times various documents have been embezzled and taken away, the aforesaid wardens have had all the aforesaid documents copied up into the aforesaid book in order to have a better record.²³

The loss and “embezzlement” of documents brought about *not* the commissioning of the book, but the inclusion of the items in question in that book. This is a crucial distinction, without which the Goldsmiths’ Register would make little sense.

While readers of *Scribes and the City* find passing references to Osbarn’s “having collected and compiled books of documents for the

Guildhall and the Goldsmiths,” with citations of the Prologue (fol. 1r), that Prologue’s translation into English (fol. 189r), and the table of contents of the Goldsmiths’ Register, they have no way of knowing that this book comprises two enormous volumes each of 200 vellum folios with measurements of ca. 420 × 280 mm (16.5 × 11 inches).²⁴ In other words it is a fair bit wider than Hm 114 and Lambeth 491 are tall (ca. 215 × 140 and 222 × 141 mm respectively).²⁵ It would have taken an extraordinarily large number of lost charters to fill these books. That aside, the Hm 114 scribe explains, in the translation of the Prologue just cited, that “al the dedis, chartris, testamentis, evidencis & munimentis that were found or myght be gete *in þe keepyng of þe wardeyns of Goldsmythes* at the tyme of þe makyng of þis book” were to be brought together so that any further loss of originals will not be so catastrophic (fol. 189r; commas and emphasis mine). These volumes’ bulkiness renders impossible the notion that a full-time Guildhall clerk, not to mention one of the busiest of its senior members, could have produced them. The clerk retained by the Goldsmiths devoted many months to the project. His hand is found on some 271 sides, the fullest of which contain 50 lines and about 850 words and contractions of text. Especially if he was responsible for collecting the materials to be copied, as Mooney and Stubbs indeed have it and as seems likely, this production stands alongside, if not above, his two literary collections, which together constitute his three major concentrated productions. The entries into the Goldsmiths’ Register are the products of a full-time, professional copyist, and it is difficult to imagine someone like Osborn abandoning his professional responsibilities on its behalf.

The final point to take from the memorandum at issue is that any Guildhall connection with the production of the Goldsmiths’ Register was at one remove (and, as noted above, was not done by “the chamber clerk” in any case). Even if all these items had been copied from originals at the Guildhall, that copying did not take place directly into these bulky volumes. The continuation of the passage quoted above explains that the documents copied into the Goldsmiths’ Register

have been placed in various chests and boxes each according to which tenement they belong, and the said boxes have been labelled to say that they refer to such tenements, and each box contains as many written documents as are specified in the book, both copies and in other cases sealed charters, the which copies were, in the absence of documents that had been lost and destroyed, retrieved and brought as copies from the Guildhall.²⁶

The book contains the texts both of the copies that could have been made from Guildhall sources and, “in other cases,” of sealed charters, already in the Goldsmiths’ Hall. Whether “retrieved and brought as copies from the Guildhall” or collected from the Goldsmiths’ Hall’s own archives, none of these documents was in the Guildhall when their texts were entered into the Goldsmiths’ Register. The Goldsmiths’ Register, in sum, was a production of the Goldsmiths’ Hall.

Mooney and Stubbs turn finally to Letter Book H, saying that they recognized that “in the main [Osborn’s additions] pertained to proceedings of the office of the chamberlain,” such as the care of the orphans of freemen, decisions that “would have been entered into the Letter Book not by the chamberlain (since his was not a clerical office) but by the chamber clerk himself.” “Taken together, these occurrences of the hand of the HM 114 Scribe in positions where the controller, or clerk of the chamber, would have been the most likely writer” – they mean as well the *Liber Albus* and Goldsmiths’ Register – “provide quite conclusive evidence of his identity as Richard Osborn.”²⁷ Such a conclusion might follow if the items he inscribed into Letter Books H and I pertained only to orphans and the like; yet those entries into Letter Book I in his hand as identified by Doyle could have been produced by anyone in the Guildhall. One proclamation, for instance, reproduced by Mooney and Stubbs, warns city dwellers that during “þis holy tyme of Cristemes” they must not “walk by nyght in eny manere mommmyng, pleyes, enterludes, or eny oþer disgisynge with eny feynyd berdis, peyntid visers, dissourmyd or colourid visages in eny wyse up peyne of enprisonement of her bodyes” (it is still lawful, though, “to eche persone for to be honestly mery as he can with-in his owne hous dwellyng”; Letter Book I, fol. 223r). Other items from Doyle’s list pertain to the counterfeiting of wine (fol. 227r), the closing of Ludgate prison and the truce between the King and the Duke of Brittany (fol. 228r), and a protest by the Chancellor and scholars of the University of Cambridge regarding their jurisdiction over the misuse of weights at fairs (fols. 229r–31r). And while my treatment of the Goldsmiths’ Register has already indicated how partial has been our sense of the Hm 114 scribe’s corpus, the great bulk of his career has gone unnoticed, an oversight the rest of this chapter remedies.

The Hm 114 Scribe’s Corpus

The Hm 114 scribe’s hand is to be found in much more of the Goldsmiths’ Register than Mooney and Stubbs indicate, as we have seen, but also in much more of Letter Book I than Doyle noticed, as well as throughout

the other surviving sources regarding London law of the era, also products of the Guildhall: the rolls recording proceedings of the Court of Husting (Deeds and Wills, Common Pleas, Pleas of Land) and the Mayor's Court (the Plea and Memoranda Rolls, individual bills).²⁸ Many of these entries are written testimonials of which the City took a record, but many others record the proceedings of the courts of which the scribe is taking notes, probably by himself, at the time. In both the Letter Books and these rolls, entries were often updated, sometimes well after the original entry; those regarding orphans as discussed above provide a good example. And the entries do not necessarily proceed chronologically; often room was left for later clerks to put to use as appropriate, and it is also probable that some entries were recorded well after their date of record.²⁹ Folios 41–62 of Letter Book I, for instance, go back and forth between entries related to regnal years 7 and 8 Henry IV. The other major site of his work is the immense Goldsmiths' Register, which began production in 1418 or later in a different milieu. The fascinating parliamentary petition of 1425 discovered by Killick is so far the only of its kind to have come to light. Here, then, is a greatly expanded list of sites where this scribe's hand is found, arranged chronologically:³⁰

21 Richard II (June 22, 1397–June 21, 1398)

Mayor's Court Plea and Memoranda Roll 38 [formerly A37], membr.
5v [November 1397]

4 Henry IV (September 30, 1402–September 29, 1403)

Mayor's Court File Original Bills MC. 1/2, item 187
Mayor's Court Plea and Memoranda Roll 34 [formerly A33], membr.
6v [September 1403]

5 Henry IV (September 30, 1403–September 29, 1404)

Husting Common Pleas Roll 128, membr. 2v
Husting Deeds and Wills Roll 132, item 113
Husting Pleas of Land Roll 128, membr. 2r
Letter Book I, fols. 32v–33r
Mayor's Court File Original Bills MC. 1/2, items 192, 197–99
Mayor's Court Plea and Memoranda Roll 40 [formerly A39],
membrs. 2v, 4v

6 Henry IV (September 30, 1404–September 29, 1405)

Husting Common Pleas Roll 128, membr. 8r
Husting Common Pleas Roll 129, membrs. 4v–9r, 10r–11r, 12r–15r

Husting Deeds and Wills Roll 133, items 7, 12–13, 18–20, 45, 48
 Husting Pleas of Land Roll 129, membr. 6r–v
 Husting Plea of Land Memorandum (Kew, National Archives
 E 40/2360)³¹
 Letter Book H, fol. 304v
 Letter Book I, fols. 36r–41v
 Mayor's Court File Original Bills MC. 1/2, items 201–202
 Mayor's Court Plea and Memoranda Roll 40 [formerly A39], membrs.
 1v, 5v–7r, 8r–v, 9v–10r, 12r

7 Henry IV (September 30, 1405–September 29, 1406)

Husting Common Pleas Roll 130, membrs. 1r–4r, 5r–6r, 7r–8v
 Husting Deeds and Wills Roll 133X, items 10, 44, 45, 74
 Husting Pleas of Land Roll 130, membr. 1r–v
 Letter Book H, fol. 255r
 Letter Book I, fols. 41v–43v, 47r–51v, 53r, 56r–59v
 Mayor's Court File Original Bills MC. 1/2, items 208–209
 Mayor's Court Plea and Memoranda Roll 34 [formerly A33],
 membr. 7v
 Mayor's Court Plea and Memoranda Roll 40 [formerly A39], membrs.
 9r, 11r–13v, 15r–18v

8 Henry IV (September 30, 1406–September 29, 1407)

Husting Common Pleas Roll 128, short item misplaced in that roll
 Husting Common Pleas Roll 131, membrs. 1r–3r, 4r–6v
 Husting Deeds and Wills Roll 134, items 6, 18, 24, 35–37, 56, 64, 69–75,
 79, 87, 92–94, 100–101, 103–104, 111–12, 122, 129–31
 Husting Pleas of Land Roll 131, membrs. 4r–5r, 7v
 Letter Book I, fols. 45r–47r, 50v, 51v–53r, 54r–56v, 61r–62r
 Mayor's Court File Original Bills MC. 1/2, items 220, 220A, 221–22
 Mayor's Court Plea and Memoranda Roll 40 [formerly A39], membrs.
 19r–20v, 22r

9 Henry IV (September 30, 1407–September 29, 1408)

Husting Common Pleas Roll 132, membrs. 1r–2r, 3r, 4r–5r, 6r
 Husting Deeds and Wills Roll 135, items 7–31, 33–106, 108–24
 Husting Pleas of Land Roll 132, membrs. 1r, 2r, 3r, 4r, 5r–6r, 7r, 8r–9r
 Letter Book H, fol. 256r³²
 Letter Book I, fol. 61r, 62v
 Mayor's Court File Original Bills MC. 1/1, item 194³³

Mayor's Court File Original Bills MC. 1/2, items 180, 182 (damaged, date uncertain), 233, 245

Mayor's Court Plea and Memoranda Roll 40 [formerly A39],
membr. 22r–v

10 Henry IV (September 30, 1408–September 29, 1409)

Husting Common Pleas Roll 133, membrs. 1r–5v

Husting Deeds and Wills Roll 136, items 1–20, 23–50, 52–53,
55–56, 58–59, 65–86

Husting Pleas of Land Roll 133, membrs. 1r–2r, 3r–8r, 9r, 10r

11 Henry IV (September 30, 1409–September 29, 1410)

Husting Deeds and Wills Roll 137, items 1–15, 20, 23, 25–28, 31

Letter Book H, fol. 283v

Letter Book I, fols. 91v–93v

12 Henry IV (September 30, 1410–September 29, 1411)

Letter Book I, fol. 111v [July 7]

3 Henry V (March 21, 1415–March 20, 1416)

Letter Book I, fol. 150v [1 May]

4 Henry V (March 21, 1416–March 20, 1417)

Husting Common Pleas Roll 140, membr. 5r [July]

5 Henry V (March 21, 1417–March 20, 1418)

Letter Book I, fol. 98r [October]

1417–19

Liber Albus, fols. 40r–51v (Table of Contents / Book 11 Abstracts);
179r, 250r–55v (Book 111); 267r–87r, 288r–300r, 301r–15r, 316r–20v,
321v–22v, 331r–38v, 345r–52r (Book 1v)³⁴

6 Henry V (March 21, 1418–March 20, 1419)

Letter Book I, fols. 223r, 228r, 234v

7 Henry V (March 21, 1419–March 20, 1420)

Letter Book I, fols. 224v, 226v–27v, 229r–31v, 232v–33r

From 1418

Goldsmiths' Register of Deeds and Charters, fols. 1r, 2r–7v, 8v–11r, 17r–20v, 22r–23v, 25r–27v, 28v–32v, 34r–44r, 45r–58r, 60r–68v, 69v–74r, 75r–79r, 80r–83v, 86r–91v, 93r–98v, 100r–102r, 104r–106r, 108r–111r, 189r–v, 198r, 201r–202r, 204r, 206r–207v, 209r–v, 374r–79r, 393r–96v³⁵

Ca. 1420–35

Troilus and Criseyde, MS Harley 3943, fols. 2r–7v, 9r–56v, 63r–67v³⁶
Brut, Siege of Jerusalem, The Three Kings of Cologne, Awntyrs off Arthure, Book of Hunting, Lambeth Palace Library MS 491, fols. 1r–290v³⁷
Piers Plowman, Mandeville's Travels, Susannah, The Three Kings of Cologne, Troilus and Criseyde, Epistola Luciferi ad Cleros, Hm 114, fols. 1r–325v

3 Henry VI (September 1, 1424–August 31, 1425)

Parliamentary Petition (Kew, National Archives SC 8/24/1197)³⁸

10 Henry VI (September 1, 1431–August 31, 1432)

Goldsmiths' Register of Deeds and Charters, fols. 114r–15r, 117r–28v, 131r–35r [final entry May]

None of these attributions should be controversial. This is not to say that they all look absolutely identical. As Mooney and Stubbs remark, “the HM 114 scribe’s writing is not as consistent as some professional scribes’ writing.”³⁹ An overlooked essay published in 1962 offers the fullest demonstration of the point. W. Nelson Francis, taking up Angus McIntosh’s call for the study of written manifestations of language (see [Chapter 3](#)), compared the graph-types of this scribe’s *Troilus* texts in Hm 114 and Harley 3943, finding thirty-three in common, twenty-six in the former alone (e.g., **h** with complete bottom loop, as in *Help ... hit* fol. 193r, line 12), and eighteen in Harley alone (e.g., secretary **r**: *wondur* line 12 of [Figure 11](#)).⁴⁰ He also noted substantial numbers of graphemic distinctions, the “[m]ost notable” of which “is the matter of minims. Instead of the five types found in [Hm 114], only two – one angular, the other straight – seem to be used” in Harley, from whose uses Francis is able to formulate four “rules which clearly distinguish between <u> and <n>” in that copy.⁴¹

These differences finally do not seem to have kept Francis from accepting that the same scribe copied these two manuscripts,⁴² and neither have Samuels, Doyle, Hanna, Mooney and Stubbs, Wakelin, or I seen any reason to doubt Root’s original attribution.⁴³ The “quite striking” similarities in graphetic and graphemic features acknowledged by Francis, which

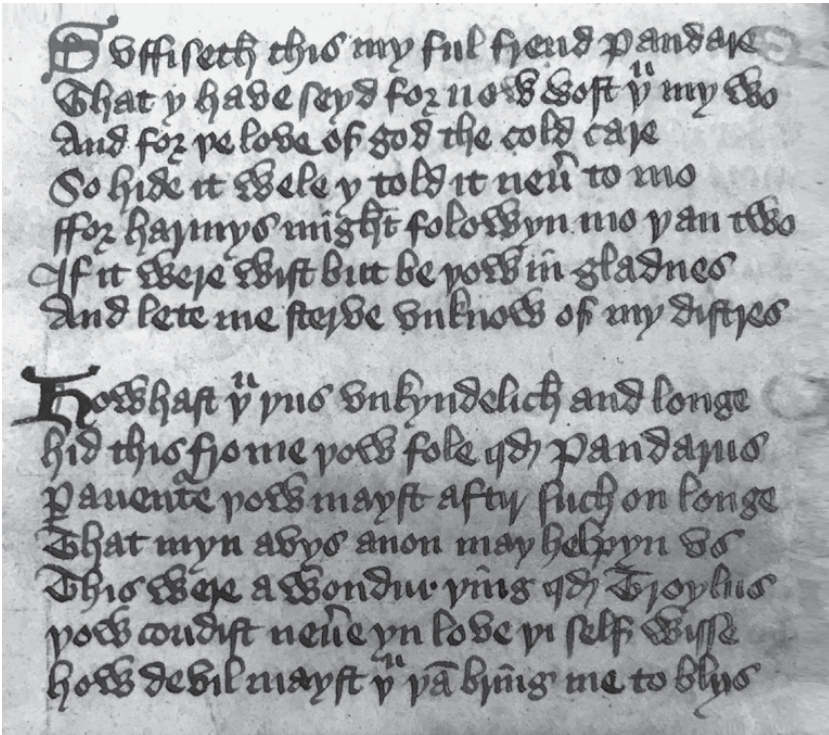


Figure 11 *Troilus and Criseyde* (Harley 3943), hand of Hm 114 scribe. Harley 3943, fol. 9v.

create the “rather splayed anglicana formata” by which Hanna characterizes his hand,⁴⁴ would be too difficult to explain otherwise than as products of the same scribe, added to which are the identical Essex dialect of their respective texts and their close genetic relationship indicating descent from the identical exemplar.⁴⁵ Thus secretary **r** might not be in Hm 114, but both long and z-shaped forms are in all his texts. The **w** with “a distinct foot at the base of the left stalk” and approach strokes “touching at the widest point of their loops” is nearly universal, but occasionally his form lacks the foot.⁴⁶ The “upper-case **I** often has a waving or even closed loop approach stroke toward the upper left side of the letter”; **h** “can have a looped descender, or just curl toward the left, be complete straight, or curl more sharply to the right with a little hook at the bottom”; “Sigma-shaped **s** in terminal position is more than usually open and often leans over to the right.”⁴⁷ These three distinctive forms appear together hundreds of times in the documents I assign to him, given the huge number of “Johannes”es

therein. I can think of very few if any items with this combination which were not also in “rather splayed” Anglicana and characterized by the **r**, **w**, and other forms that so clearly reveal the Hm 114 scribe’s hand. These features occur in his most informal hand (which is much more so than his Hm 114 *Troilus*) and in his more formal hand (which is much more so than his Harley 3943 *Troilus*).⁴⁸

The entries into Letter Book I from 1418–19, fols. 223–33, which Doyle identified as the Hm 114 scribe’s, are all in this most formal of his scripts, which perhaps explains how he overlooked so much else of his of that volume, especially from fols. 36–62. But he, and Mooney and Stubbs, also missed other examples of the formal hand in that volume. Some of this will come back to us in the [next chapter](#). For now, [Figure 12](#) presents three specimens from the hundreds of newly identified entries over thirty-five years: from 1397, 1406 (both from the Plea and Memoranda Rolls), and 1432 (Goldsmiths’ Register). The first, the earliest datable item in his hand, is the most typical; the middle item distinctive in its rare uses of secretary **a** and **g** and kidney-shaped terminal **-s**, owing to the French of the item (e.g., *deschargez as toutz iours* final line), alongside his more usual forms; the final, his last datable entry (May 1432), combines his informal traits (disregard of the ruled lines, frequent use of the more informal **h** form with leg curling back, **w** without the foot at the base of the stalk) with his formal ones: **h** forms with straight leg, careful minims, use of 8-shaped terminal **s**, and the occasional diamond-shaped **o**.

Troilus and Criseyde in the Goldsmiths’ Hall, 1384–1474

This new body of data both lays the groundwork for any future discoveries of the Hm 114 scribe’s work and enables as precise an account of any scribe’s career as I am aware of. He was associated with the Guildhall in some capacity in late 1397, though the absence of any other records for another five years suggests he was perhaps an apprentice or freelancer at that stage. From December 1403 through May 1410 he was the dominant clerk of the Guildhall records, then comes a single entry in July 1411, after which he disappears from the records for four years. The very few datable entries from 1415–17 – one in each of those three years – contrast sharply with the abundance of the earlier era.

After an intense return to substantial copying, this time only in the custumals, from ca. 1417 to 1419, he again vanishes from the Guildhall, this time for good. It happens that the Goldsmiths’ Register was acquired by that company in 1418, and Hanna says that “the scribe’s activity should probably

- [illegible]

Figure 12 Documents from the London Guildhall and the Goldsmiths' Company, 1397–1432, hand of Hm 114 scribe. London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, (a) CLA/024/01/02/038, Plea and Memoranda Roll 38 (former ref. A37), membr. 5v; (b) Plea and Memoranda Roll 40 [formerly A39], membr. 11r; (c) Goldsmiths' Register, fol. 135r.

be placed in the later 1420s or early 1430s.”⁴⁹ It is not impossible that, as Mooney and Stubbs have it, the scribe “may have begun writing” some portions of Lambeth 491 before 1414, but since they say this on the basis of supposed “knowledge that the scribe, Richard Osborn, had a long career in one place,” the basis for such surmises no longer holds.⁵⁰ It would be simpler to see him as a junior clerk at the Guildhall when the Husting, Mayor’s

Court, and custumal materials were produced, 1403–10 (or 1411) and 1417–20, but not when they were not. The 1420s and beyond were taken up with work in the Goldsmiths' Hall around the corner and then with the collation and copying of the *Troilus*, *Piers Plowman*, and the rest.

This latter claim relies on the only two secure dates from the later end of his known career: the 1418 *terminus a quo* for the Goldsmiths' Register and his thirty-six-page stint in that volume completed after May 1432. Further evidence for this chronology inheres in the history of the only one of the Hm 114 scribe's literary productions in which other scribal hands feature prominently, the *Troilus* in Harley 3943 (Figure 13). This manuscript has a complicated history, but for our purposes what matters is simply that the Hm 114 scribe, its Hand 1, abandoned the project at line 1v.196, just over midway through a quire (he started anew in Hm 114), and that many decades later the lines remaining, 1v.407–v.1869 (except for v.1807–27, absent from this copy), were added by the copy's Hand 4 over what are now folios 71r–116v.⁵¹ Mooney and Stubbs suggest that Osborn's "unfinished manuscript may have remained at the Guildhall to be completed decades later,"⁵² but I would propose the Goldsmiths' Hall as the site where this *Troilus* fragment abandoned by the Hm 114 scribe was discovered and completed.

What prompts this idea is Hand 4's very strong resemblance to an entry into the Goldsmiths' Register of ca. 1473 recording the will of the prominent Goldsmith Olyver Davy, suggesting the possibility that they are indeed the same scribe (Figure 14).

First, their respective cadels, that is, "the embellishment of capital letters with geometric patterns and parallel lines,"⁵³ look identical if that on the bottom of Harley's fol. 93r is turned upside-down and compared with that on top-line **w** here. Both texts feature a sharp angle atop single-compartment **a**, identically formed minims, and an unlooped **d** form with a strong stroke angling to the upper left at 45 degrees, as in *audiens* (line 4 Harley), *and* (2 × line 2 Davy). Long -**s** with a pronounced downward turn appears everywhere (*absens* line 5 Harley; *possessyoun* line 1 Davy), except in terminal position where it is always kidney-shaped, with a horn in the upper right, as seen in both *Troilus* terms just cited and in *almes* line 11 Davy.⁵⁴ Other striking features include horned and flat-topped **g** "with barely an extension for the tail" (*grene* line 12 Harley; *beyng* line 3 Davy);⁵⁵ **y** whose tail forms a gentle curve (the *my* line 1 Harley looks identical to *my* line 5 Davy); and, most notably, **A** with "a crescent or semicircular stroke additional to the top of the letter, half-encircling the top of the ascender or upper part of the letter" (*absens* line 5 Harley; *Ande* line 14 Davy).⁵⁶

Who seeth you now my rixt lode star
Who sitte rixt now or stant in yo^r p^resence
Who can asorte now yo^r herte were
Now I am gone whow frome your audiens
Who speleth for me rixt now in my absens
Alas noo avright f. y^e is all my care
ffor well I wote as yueth as I y^e face

How shulde I yus x dayes ful endur
Whan I y^e furest myght haue all y^e tene
how shall she doo eke somefult creatur
ffor the tendurnesse how shall she eke sustene
Such woo for me O pitous pale f. wrene
Shalke your freysh womanly face
ffor loutyng or y^e retone vn to y^e place

And whan he felt in any stomerunges
A none he shulde be gyng for to treone
and drene of y^e deedfult p^ringes
That myght be as drene he were a lone
In place horrible makung ay his none
Or mett pat he was a moynge alle
his ennemyes and in to her handes falle

And per w^t all his body shulde ferte
And w^t the ferte all sodenly a wake
and such a tremour felt aboute his herte
That of y^e fere his body shulde quake
And per w^t all he shulde a noyse make
and seme as pouth he shulde fall depe
ffrome hie a losse f. paid he shulde wepe

And rewe vn him self so pitously
That meruaile was to here his fanteche
another tyme he shulde myghtly
comforte him self f. sey it was foly
So causeles suche drede for drede
and ofte bewyne his asore peynes newe
That euy man myght in his forwes rewe

Figure 13 *Troilus and Criseyde* (Harley 3943), Hand 4.
© The British Library Board. MS Harley 3943, fol. 93r.

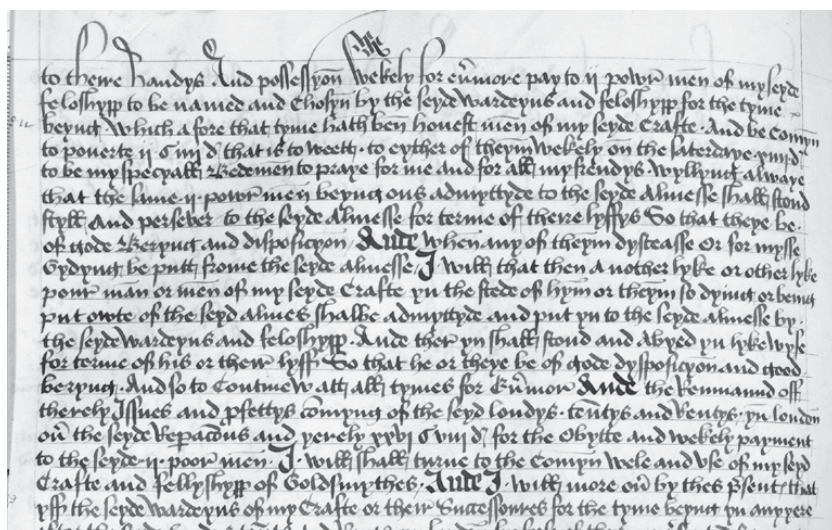


Figure 14 Goldsmiths' Company, Register of Deeds, perhaps Hand 4 of Harley 3943. London, Goldsmiths' Register, fol. 269v: top eighteen lines (out of fifty).

To be sure, some of the differences between the two items are notable. This crescent atop the Goldsmiths' *Ande* just cited might instead be taken as the top of a figure-8 formation. The standard **r** form in that text is z-shaped (*wardeyns*, for line 2), though it occasionally uses the favored Harley form (*eu(er)more* line 1; cf. *sterr(e)* line 1 Harley). It might be that the spikier appearance of the *Troilus* text, and its small flourishes, such as the “crossing, or cap, at the top of [**d**’s] ascender” (*handes* line 21),⁵⁷ not found in the copy of Davy’s will (and rarely found in the *Troilus*), explain such differences and are mere indexes to the texts’ varying levels of formality or responses to surroundings, as we have seen above regarding the Hm 114 scribe’s hand. The other possibility is that the differences between Hand 4 of Harley and the Davy will in the Goldsmiths’ Register are akin to those between Trinity B.15.17 and Hg-El. To me, what tips the balance in favor of the attribution are precisely the appearance of the Hm 114 scribe’s hand in both volumes and these scribes’ close affiliations with the Goldsmiths. The similarities are remarkable on their own terms; if they are different hands, both copying alongside the Hm 114 scribe’s work of a half-century earlier, the coincidence is even more extraordinary than are those similarities.

Yet another Goldsmiths’ clerk was associated with the early production of *Troilus* as well, which either adds to the remarkable string of coincidences or

offers a simple explanation of the production of Harley 3943. Thomas Usk, before falling victim to the Merciless Parliament of 1388, had been clerk of the Goldsmiths and composed the fatal *Appeal against Northampton* and the more poignant *Testament of Love*.⁵⁸ This latter work, which “fairly conclusive” evidence shows “was probably composed between December 1384 and June 1385,”⁵⁹ displays his “incontrovertible intimacy with *Troilus and Criseyde*,”⁶⁰ which he probably knew in its entirety in manuscript form.⁶¹ It seems plausible that a manuscript of the poem either copied or read by Usk remained in the Goldsmiths' Hall where it served as exemplar for Harley 3943 and Hm 114, just as Harley 3943 itself seems likely to have remained there fifty or so years after its Hand 1 abandoned it. This proposal accords well with the relevant dates. Usk's *Appeal* of August 1384 effected a break with the company, of course, and indeed in it he singles its members out for attack;⁶² but the Wardens' accounts for May 1384–May 1385 of a receipt of 6s 8d “de Johan Walsham pur le executrie de la femme de Thomas Skreveynner” suggest that his association lasted till his arrest in July or August 1384.⁶³ Finally, Harley 3943 and Hm 114 attest in part a “‘rough’ early draft” of the *Troilus*, suggesting that their scribe had a very early copy to hand.⁶⁴ The trail goes cold here, Usk's copy, if such existed, disappearing from sight.⁶⁵

Regardless of whether Usk's copy served as exemplar for Harley 3943 and Hm 114, these three (or perhaps only two) Goldsmiths men were among those clerks who “formed a conduit between the livery companies and the writings of men such as Chaucer and Gower.”⁶⁶ Pynkhurst had connections with the Mercers; John Brynchele, clerk of the Tailors' Company from ca. 1392, bequeathed five books, including a Boethius in English and the *Talys of Caunterbury*, in his will of 1420;⁶⁷ Brynchele was a Southwark neighbor and associate of Thomas Spencer, scrivener, whose father might have been a citizen and cutler of London, whose entry into the Common Paper appears just below Pynkhurst's, and who had owned and perhaps copied a *Troilus* in the 1390s which, he claimed in a 1405 law suit, he had handed over in payment of the debt for which he was being sued;⁶⁸ and the scribe of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 102, main text *Piers Plowman* C, was likely a junior clerk of the Brewers' Guild, one Robert Lynford.⁶⁹ Simon Horobin has suggested that Lynford, who would have had to visit the Guildhall for certain transactions, became acquainted there with the Hm 114 scribe, and that such interaction between them, and between “other clerks employed by the various London guilds at the Guildhall, may well explain the close relationship between the early copies of the C text [of *Piers Plowman*] observed by Russell and Kane.”⁷⁰ Perhaps

these clerks were acquainted, but the texts of their respective *Pierses* are not particularly close, not least because Hm 114 is “basically a B text,”⁷¹ and the dates of Lynford’s involvement with the Brewers’ Memorandum Book (1418–41) overlap more with the Hm 114 scribe’s time at the Goldsmiths than at the Guildhall.

Mooney and Stubbs, too, categorize these men as “scribes associated with the Guildhall,” in keeping with their argument that that institution was the incubator of the great Middle English literature.⁷² But there is no evidence that any of them, including the only one with firm connections with the Guildhall, produced their literary manuscripts there, a point Chapter 5 will elaborate. If there was an affinity of clerks involved in the copying of Chaucer, Langland, and Gower, it was of a rather loose sort. My proposal regarding the Hm 114 scribe’s likely source for the *Troilus* instances a line of contact across the decades and within the walls of a single building. If the Hm 114 scribe was in the City of London as he collated copies of Chaucer’s poem and, especially, of *Piers Plowman* – and his entire career, whose earliest and latest firm dates so far identified are 1397 and 1432, suggests as much – then all surviving evidence points not to the Guildhall but to Foster Lane, where a Goldsmiths’ Hall has been since 1339, as that site.

The Scribe of the Goldsmiths’ Register as Compiler

Richard Osborn entered the picture in large part because the Guildhall was not only the site, but also the topic, of what may be the Hm 114 scribe’s non-literary writing. The evidence for this identification, say Mooney and Stubbs, was “based on the appearance of his hand in the London Letter Book H in entries specifically associated with the office of chamberlain.”⁷³ Entries associated with the office of the chamberlain, though, are also entries associated with the Guildhall, for the chamberlain was after all a very senior figure. Any Guildhall clerk could have inscribed them. The converse point is that, as is now clear, the clerk of the Goldsmiths’ Register copied just about everything that came through the door of the Guildhall ca. 1404–10. So long as we thought he was responsible only for certain sections of the *Liber Albus* and the Letter Books at this end of his clerical career it perhaps made sense to see him as only a creature of the Guildhall: he wrote what he was. Election results for Mayor; proclamations quelling potential Christmastime rowdiness; records of the punishments meted out to those who trafficked in illegal cheese; explanations of the offices of the chamberlain; descriptions of the great civic processions.

Mooney and Stubbs propose that “having collected and compiled books of documents for the Guildhall and the Goldsmiths” in the 1420s, “Osborn was turning to collecting and compiling manuscripts of Middle English texts.”⁷⁴ So long as he remains Richard Osborn that is about as far as one can connect his two lives. In this scenario he does not differ very much from those who would later own or consult Hm 114: the sixteenth-century antiquarian Henry Spelman, who had “a good eye for preserving important manuscripts” (including Hm 114), and the eighteenth-century law student who collated the *Piers Plowman* of Hm 114 word-for-word, line-for-line against A- and B-copies.⁷⁵ The careers of figures like Thomas Usk and Thomas Hoccleve have placed what we might term bureaucratic or mercantile poetics at the center of recent histories of medieval London literary activity.⁷⁶ As Richard Osborn, the Hm 114 scribe’s place in this schema has been very comfortable. But the opening out of his corpus and disassociation of him from Osborn effect a shift in perspective, whereby the world of the livery companies is not necessarily primary. The clerk identified as the Hm 114 scribe recorded the decisions, activities, and traditions not just of the Guildhall, but of London and beyond.

A look at some of these contents lifts the veil from the delightful and often poignant stories of medieval Londoners, including ones intimately connected with Chaucer; and more important, it also sets the stage for a more nuanced understanding of the materials from which the great “Books” of the fifteenth century’s first decades (Hm 114, Ellesmere, Trinity R.3.20, etc.) were formed. It is the Hm 114 scribe who recorded the 1406 conveyance by one William Chaumbre, former archdeacon of Dublin and Treasurer of Ireland, of lands and tenements near St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, to his *consanguineo* Thomas Chaucer, known to us as son of Geoffrey (Husting Deeds and Wills Roll 133x, item 74). Such simple records often call forth intriguing subplots, and such proves to be the case here, as Chaumbre was related, “perhaps distantly or even illegitimately,” to the noble Burghersh family into which Thomas married;⁷⁷ had been archdeacon of Dublin and Treasurer of Ireland; and was embroiled in minor scandals involving finances and the archdeaconry which were still not settled upon his death. The Crown thus attempted, in 1419, to distrain Thomas for a debt of about 25/ Chaumbre owed to the Crown in the property at issue. Thomas complained that this was unjust because Chaumbre had conveyed these lands to him for 20/ a year in a charter, which we know only from its copy in the Hm 114 scribe’s hand, he displayed to the Court.⁷⁸

In Hm 114 itself, too, a youth appeals to the authorities for respite from the burdens of consanguinity with her irreputable elder: one wonders whether

its scribe made the connection with the poet's son and Chaumbre as he copied out Criseyde's appeal to Hector for mercy. If he knew Chaucer's fabliaux, he might well have been minded of the real-life equivalents he spent his days recording. Take the remarkable case of John Rede, weaver, whose intricacies reveal themselves only upon a patient reading of three of his separate entries in Plea and Memoranda Roll 40 (formerly A39) spread over four months and referring to events as long ago as the previous year and as recently as last week.⁷⁹ The Hm 114 scribe had already recorded a minor claim against "Johannem Rede Webbe" in the Mayor's Court ca. 1403 (MC. 1/2, item 187), but a few years later this figure entered the records much more colorfully. On May 13, 1405, Thomas Polle and Thomas Fauconer, sheriffs of London, "under color of their office," so Rede said, had "arrested, imprisoned and detained him until he entered into a bond of 100 marks for his delivery," upon which they absconded with "three cloths of blanket, two pieces of silver with a silver covercle, three mazers harnessed with silver and one dozen silver spoons, value £100, belonging to him, as he alleged." Rede submitted a writ to the Exchequer suing the sheriffs, but the Mayor and Aldermen, seeking to settle the issue in February, questioned each party separately, securing assurances that both would accept their arbitration. Rede agreed to withdraw his writ, and the sheriffs brought in the bond. "On 2 March, Cecilia, widow of William Denton, appeared in court and also agreed to accept the award in so far as it concerned herself," though at this stage we do not yet know what those concerns were. A few months later, on May 8, 1406, the Mayor and Aldermen

gave as their award that John Rede, for certain trespasses against Thomas Polle and Thomas Fauconer, should pay them the sum of £20, and that the latter, for their trespasses against John Rede, should pay him the sum of £4 or goods and chattels to the same value, and that the obligation for 100 marks should be cancelled, further that John Rede should not prosecute his suit in the Exchequer on 9 May, and that out of the goods which the above-mentioned Cecilia had entrusted to him for her keep he should provide for her in the same manner as he had done before the dispute between himself and the sheriffs, or account to her by due process of law.

The Exchequer, though, still wanted to find out what was going on, and called upon the present sheriffs of London, Polle and Fauconer's successors, to explain why they had recently imprisoned John Rede. They had done so on account of "certain causes pending before the mayor," they said. So the Exchequer summoned the mayor, who returned "that John Rede had been committed to prison on 8 May 1406" – the date of the arbitration – "as a punishment for opprobrious, unseemly and rebellious words

openly spoken to himself and the aldermen, to the great scandal of the Mayoralty Court of the city (*curie Maioratus Civitatis*), in order that others henceforth might be deterred from speaking the like words." Rede did not submit very peacefully to the Mayor and Aldermen's judgment. Who could blame him?

As if his story were not juicy enough, one month later John Rede, weaver, was convicted of adultery with Johanna Stylerd, in the Ward of Bishopsgate (Letter Book I, fol. 286v, not in the Hm 114 scribe's hand). (The John Rede who committed adultery with Alice, wife of Nicholas Clerk, in 1429, fol. 289r, is almost certainly a different man as he was to be punished canonically.) The *Cook's Tale* has nothing on all this. And Rede's travails are among the dozens or hundreds of such accounts that the Hm 114 scribe copied into all the sets of rolls between 1403 and 1410.⁸⁰

The English are not the sole inhabitants of the world recorded and created by this clerk. In February 1406 one John Sadler, vintner, brought Hankyn van Hannard "before the Mayor and Aldermen as a native of Flanders and an adherent of the king's enemies"; but Thomas Meygneld, grocer, came to the rescue, with a bond in £40, that Hankyn "would produce authentic letters under seal to prove that he was born in Holland and was not an adherent of the king's enemies."⁸¹ The prominent Florentine merchant banker Philip de Albertis appears throughout 1407, most prominently in a suit against one John Megre, merchant, for failure to deliver £150 worth of tin. A jury was summoned, half of whom were speakers of Philip's native language, before the matter was finally settled in his favor. (The Hm 114 scribe also records that Philip duly repaid 40 marks to a Norfolk chaplain despite the latter's having lost his note thereof.)⁸² And Cecilia might have had a mere walk-on role in the case of John Rede, but women take center stage elsewhere. According to one remarkable entry in Letter Book I, on August 13, 1406 three men, including the Common Serjeant-at-law, asserted that "women who were detained for various causes in a certain chamber in the King's Gaol of Newgate were uncomfortably housed by reason of the smallness of the chamber, and that when they wished to relieve nature (*cum nature pondus necessarie deponerent*) they were obliged to pass through a certain house of the said gaol called 'Bocardo,' where a great number of men were confined, to their great shame and hurt" (fol. 51v). The complainants sought, and were granted, permission to construct a separate building to imprison women.⁸³

The clerk of the Goldsmiths' Register wrote not just about city customs and the orphans under the chamberlain's care, as might have seemed the

case for the past decade or so, but about all of those elements of London life that availed themselves of the courts. The great bulk of his writing was in Latin, with a few French and English entries scattered about, the latter of which will be of interest to anyone seeking a full linguistic profile of this scribe and his texts.⁸⁴ Unfortunately there are no editions of any of this material, and translations only of most of Letter Book I, some of the Deeds and Wills, and selections of the Plea and Memoranda Rolls, though of these only the Deeds and Wills in his hand can be identified as such without checking the originals themselves. Lisa Jefferson is working on an edition of the Goldsmiths' Register. The Pleas of Land and Common Pleas have been neither edited nor translated.

Yet our sense of his career is broadened by the knowledge, in itself, that so much more exists in the Hm 114 scribe's hand than anyone has known or imagined. We at least now know what sorts of materials he copied, by which I refer both to content – wills, deeds, pleas in addition to the literary works – and matter, including years' worth of rolls as well as the larger literary books and Goldsmiths' Register that have attracted all our attention to date. His work on the rolls provided crucial preparation for the later, more celebrated materials whose connection with London literary life has already been drawn out by Sheila Lindenbaum. "At about the same time as the compilation of the *Liber Albus*," she observes, "guilds, religious confraternities, hospitals and religious houses markedly increased their demand for copies of ordinances and charters and gathered such documents in 'books'," citing, among others, the Goldsmiths' depositing of the Register of Deeds in their treasury in 1418. "From the *Liber Albus* and the guilds' official 'books'," she continues, "it is only a small step to the poetic compilations being produced by the London book trade": "Like Carpenter, the deviser of Ellesmere thinks of his text as a bringing together of diverse materials into a single book," as in El's explicit: "heere is ended the book of the tales of Caunterbury compiled by Geffrey Chaucer" (fol. 232v). Likewise John Shirley, in the collections of Lydgate and Chaucer at the heart of [Chapter 1](#), "typically incorporates texts from 'sondry place' into convenient collections, complete with headnotes as to occasion and genre, interpretive marginalia, and tables of contents."⁸⁵ The subject of this chapter was an active participant in four such productions, twice as many as was Scribe B: the *Liber Albus*, the Goldsmiths' Register, Hm 114, and Lambeth 491.

But he began collecting the voices, stories, and narratives of medieval London well before the production of these "Books." He also began providing headers, corrections, and updates in the form of those *Postea*

additions, reminders that the stories he recorded were not mere historical artifacts but ongoing productions. He was not alone in doing all this, of course; but so far as we know he was the only clerk to have devoted a career to such work before turning to collections featuring Chaucer and Langland. This recording of the lives of those many men (and some women) who came before the Mayor's Court, and who had their wills registered in the Court of Husting, I would suggest, was no less important a model for the larger-scale books commissioned by the guilds, religious houses, and the like than were the Ellesmere manuscript and Shirley's collections. It was Lindenbaum who discovered in a Plea and Memoranda Roll the story of the transgender prostitute John/Eleanor Rykener, entered over two years before the first known appearance of the Hm 114 scribe's hand: is this "the real *Cook's Tale*?" asks Carolyn Dinshaw, and it certainly rivals Rede's story for the title.⁸⁶ Rykener is now widely known, but the materials in which he/she is found remain obscure to most readers. This material deserves its place, perhaps a central one, in histories of late-medieval English culture and literature.

In the scribe of the Goldsmiths' Register, of Huntington Hm 114 and Lambeth 491, of the sections of Harley 3943 that seem to have been discovered and completed on Foster Lane, and, not least, of the hundreds of membranes and pages copied in the Guildhall, we have the first concrete connection between the productions of such stories as John Rede's on the one hand and of the magnificent stanzas of *Troilus and Criseyde* and alliterative lines of *Piers Plowman* on the other. It would be difficult to nominate any other individual, medieval or modern, who did more to record and preserve the lives, thoughts, and beliefs of the men and women of medieval London and beyond, from a weaver caught in a tangle involving four sheriffs and a widow to mummers on the Christmas streets, from the Dreamer Will seeking Dobest to Troilus in the seventh sphere (as it is in his copy), looking down on this little spot of earth with a sorrowful laugh.

The Guildhall Clerks

Scribes and the City begins with Richard Osborn, its Hm 114 scribe, rather than his predecessors because “his writing offers the clearest evidence we have for a personal interest in Middle English literary texts among the highest officers of the Guildhall,” where “clearest” seems to refer not to the quality of that evidence but to the possible “significance in the fact that” Lambeth 491 and Hm 114 were being produced when the Guildhall Library was getting off the ground, ca. 1423–25.¹ In fact, the authors cite only one other senior officer who copied vernacular literature: John Marchaunt, identified as Scribe D (alongside Scribe B) on the Trinity Gower and specialist in that poet. Marchaunt preceded Osborn as clerk of the chamberlain from 1380 to 1399, then served till 1417 as common clerk, “[t]he third in the triumvirate of city officers, after the recorder and chamberlain,” who “swore to defend the city’s rights and liberties, to enter all the pleas in the Husting court and in the various assizes, to keep the city’s secrets, and to keep safely the city’s possessions entrusted to him.”² As common clerk he was also responsible for the Letter Books, and thus supervised the Hm 114’s copying therein from ca. 1404 to 1411.³ At first glance John Carpenter, subject of the final of the chapters devoted to the four protagonists, seems a match for Osborn and Marchaunt as the latter’s successor as the common clerk – indeed, perhaps the most successful of the fifteenth century – and scribe of two Gowers and a Chaucer. Yet as we will see the authors date his career as literary scribe to the era before he took on that role. That leaves two men whom no Guildhall records name: the star of the book, Adam Pynkhurst, and Richard Frampton, relegated to a chapter on “Other Scribes Associated with the Guildhall or its Clerks.”

The image created here, of five Guildhall men, or at least five men at some point in their careers employed by the Guildhall, working in concert to promote the literature written by their own acquaintances as part of a political movement, is powerful and elegant. In asserting that *Scribes and the City* “could rank with Malcolm Parkes’s volume on *English Cursive*

Book Hands (1969)” – perhaps the seminal work in the field to date – “as a critical tool that advances study,” Michael Calabrese surely speaks on behalf of many.⁴ What makes the book so compelling, though, is not the notion that Guildhall clerks might have been involved in London’s literary production. After all, as Ralph Hanna remarks, “anyone who wanted a new professionally produced book would need to contract a scribe, and London’s Guildhall was surely an obvious source of careful and experienced calligraphic writers.”⁵ Rather, the book compels because of the specificity of the identifications, because three of them are or would become such powerful men and a fourth was Pynkhurst. If my removal of Osborn from the picture is accurate, the case, especially insofar as it pertains to the establishment of the Guildhall library, is much weaker than it seemed, but the other identifications and claims regarding Marchaunt, Pynkhurst, Carpenter, and Frampton are major and call for careful consideration.

This chapter works through the evidence proffered for the argument of *Scribes and the City*, concluding that the Guildhall was not a privileged center of literary copying, if it was a site of any literary copying at all. Scribe D might have been a junior Guildhall clerk ca. 1399–1401, and Richard Frampton was certainly commissioned by the City, perhaps doing his work for its officers in the Guildhall, but there is no evidence to indicate that their literary copying occurred in that institution. *Scribes and the City*’s greatest success is its identification of John Carpenter as scribe of one copy of Gower. But few if any of the other claims regarding these men turn out to be very plausible on closer examination. Whatever roles Chaucer, Langland, Gower, and Trevisa had in the cultural, political, and religious lives of the citizens of Lancastrian London owed very little to the Guildhall and nothing, so far as surviving evidence indicates, to its new library, with which Mooney and Stubbs connect the putative copying of Osborn and Carpenter. Lancastrian London’s vernacular literary production was much more diffuse and difficult to localize than recent studies have argued.

John Marchaunt/?Scribe D

For the elegance of his script, the quality of the texts he copied, and the quantity of his output, D is unrivaled in the annals of Middle English scribal activity. The *Confessio Amantis* in Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.2, in which he took the fourth of five known stints (hence his moniker), is one of eight Gowers in which his hand appears. He also copied two of the earliest *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts, the important early “Ilchester” copy of *Piers Plowman*, a substantial portion of a copy

of Trevisa's *De proprietatibus rerum*, and the bulk of a prose *Brut*.⁶ A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes presumed he was a full-time scribe, but Mooney and Stubbs have now identified him as John Marchaunt, who was "both well rewarded and well regarded" in his position as common clerk, being "granted a house over the middle gate of Guildhall."⁷

The process of identifying Marchaunt as D, whose hand "is notable for the lack of distinctive characteristics," was not straightforward.⁸ The hand's most salient characteristics, say Doyle and Parkes, "lie in the refinement, the careful proportions and disciplined qualities of the handwriting."⁹ Still, since another scribe exhibits characteristics so similar to those of D that they call him the Delta Scribe, Doyle and Parkes isolate the former's peculiar features: "The tops of all D's minim strokes and of other letters of comparable height (such as **v**) are level at the same height, whereas the bottoms are often irregular" (Fig. 15, *pound* 1, *nere* 2).¹⁰

His work is distinguished by its **w**, the top of whose middle stalk "is usually slightly higher than the left, and both turn to the right at the head," Mooney and Stubbs remark: "The tops of the stalks may appear as closed loops [7 *werkyng*], or alternatively open strokes turning to the right, or they may have one of each type [9 *wold*]."¹¹ Doyle and Parkes also note "his **I** with its minor variations in the approach stroke" (3 *I*, 17 *I*),¹² a form that Mooney and Stubbs point out also usually features a lump to left of the stem.¹³ Doyle and Parkes conclude their discussion by observing that he employs

a number of variants of the same *litterae notabiliores*, especially of **A** [2, 10]; the secretary forms of **r** and final short-**s** are common, and have been assimilated to the duct and proportions of his hand. The individuality of D's hand also emerges in certain personal habits: the various ways of treating the limb and tailstroke of the letter **h** which is tucked away (often awkwardly) in the space below the letter [6 *chanou(n)*, 7 *his*]; and the rounded downward curve with which he occasionally terminated the shoulder of a final long-**r** [21 *neuer*].¹⁴

Mooney and Stubbs assemble variant versions of the forms **a**, **d**, **g**, **h**, **r**, **s**, **w**, and **y** taken from D's literary manuscripts into "an established 'style-sheet' for the hand."¹⁵ Yet the authors spend the following pages demonstrating that the items they newly attribute to D diverge from this style-sheet. The primary criterion seems to be not adherence to D's established forms but rather relative plausibility as John Marchaunt's, and indeed they claim to have "examined Letter Books G, H and I for examples of Marchaunt's hand" rather than to have compared these texts to D's hand and judged them to be matches.¹⁶ "There are differences, of

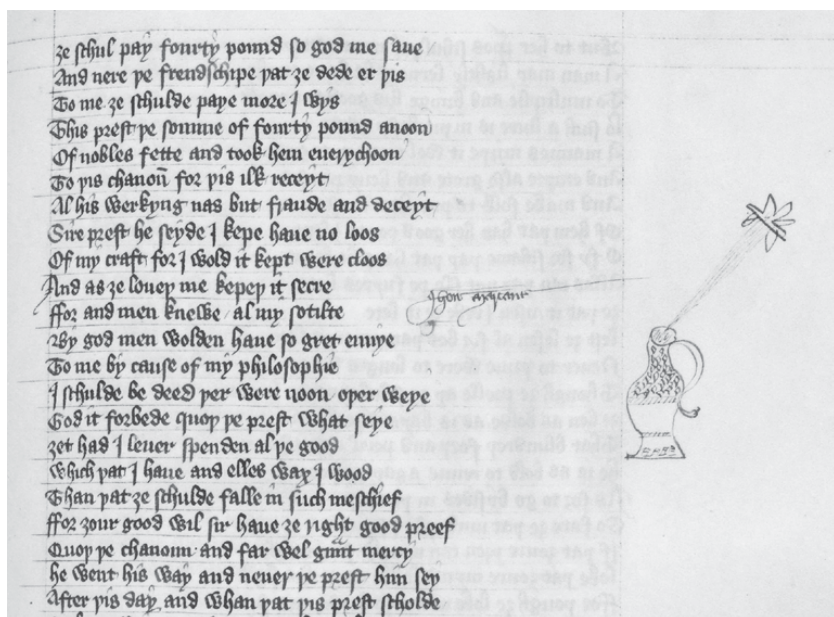


Figure 15 *Canterbury Tales* (Harley 7334), main hand, Scribe D;
 “Jhon Marcant” and vase in later hand.

© The British Library Board. MS Harley 7334, fol. 18or.

course,” they remark about the letter forms of a 1381 entry into Letter Book G (fol. 232v), though without explaining the sentence’s qualifier: this entry “uses secretary **a** alongside anglicana **a**, and the only example of **g** in this document is a secretary **g**,” both of which are all but absent from his huge corpus of literary copying.¹⁷ Its **I/J** form has neither D’s approach stroke nor lump. The item is nevertheless included because it concerns an orphan and thus, so they believe, must have been inscribed by the clerk of the chamberlain, who at this point was Marchaunt, the same logic that led to the identification of the Hm 114 scribe as Osborn.

A deed of 1390, too, diverges from the style-sheet: “the anglicana **a** which is so much a part of [D’s] literary script is absent, and the whole aspect is much spikier than in his literary manuscripts.”¹⁸ In addition, some of its letter forms, such as **W** with left stalk taller than middle one and **I** without lump to left of stem, do not appear on that sheet. It is included because it “deals with the transfer of property from a family of le Botoners in the fourteenth century, and the le Botoners were ancestors of the Marchaunts,” John’s father Nicholas even being mentioned.¹⁹ This

evidence, it seems to me, turns into its own conclusion in the same way that “Adam Scryveyne” did for the identification of Pynkhurst as Chaucer’s scribe: “A family interest may have been one of the reasons why Marchaunt copied this particular deed, and thus would support an identification.”²⁰ Logical circularity aside, the deed, number 96 in roll 118, is concerned not with ancestry but with the holdings of John Doget, son and heir of the London vintner Walter, and its hand’s next entry, the only other of his I have encountered, pertains to Alicia Doget, John’s mother, with no mention of a Marchaunt.²¹

The dorse of a grant of December 1404 whose main text is by the Hm 114 scribe summarizes the purpose of the grant and is followed by “Marchaunt” in the same hand, which the authors take to be his signature.²² This short text, too, is marked by difference, being “more formal and angular than the hand of most of his literary manuscripts.”²³ But, the authors say, “Doyle and Parkes remark on the difference in the degree of formality in Scribe D’s hand in some of his manuscripts, and we should expect to see those same degrees of difference in his documentary work.”²⁴ This would be a fair explanation regarding items securely attributable to the same hand, a phenomenon we saw for instance in [Chapter 4](#)’s discussion of texts in variously formal current and set hands unquestionably attributable to the Hm 114 scribe, but I am not convinced that such is the situation here.

D’s hand, according to Mooney and Stubbs, appears in “several sections of Book 111 of the *Liber Albus*,” citing entries on fols. 208v, 242v, and 244v.²⁵ While on the whole this attribution looks more probable than those considered above, still, folio 197v as depicted in *Scribes and the City* features a terminal reverse **e** (*Citee*, line 5 of their Fig. 3.12) that I do not find in D’s hand but which is a feature of, for instance, the Delta scribe’s *Polychronicon*, BL Additional MS 24194, fol. 104v.²⁶ This specimen from the *Liber Albus* also features “a secretary **g** which is an exact replica of the two we have found in Additional MS 27944,” which sounds impressive until one remembers that these **g**’s are the only two they found “[i]n the hundreds of folios from Scribe D’s literary texts we have examined” and that it is also an exact replica of almost any clerk’s form of that letter, such as those used frequently by the Hm 114 scribe.²⁷ Neither does the item’s aspect look much like that of D’s Gower, Langland, and Trevisa texts. In any case, if the attribution is accurate it does not support Mooney and Stubbs’s case that D was a Guildhall scribe ca. 1394, given that “the evidence suggests that Book 111 was written at the very end of the fourteenth or early in the fifteenth century.”²⁸

To my eye the attribution of “more or less all the entries on fols 1–5v and 8–12v” of Letter Book I (ca. 1399–1401)²⁹ to Scribe D is the most plausible of

these, but its interpretation as evidence that he was Marchaunt faces problems. "This copying of a large segment of text at the beginning of a new Letter Book," they write, "helped us identify this as the hand of John Marchaunt ... At the beginning of a new Letter Book the copying of important material such as this would be carried out by one of these men principally responsible for the content," that is, either the chamber clerk (Richard Osborn) or the common clerk (John Marchaunt), which, they say, can be narrowed to the latter since Osborn was already the Hm 114 scribe.³⁰ If the premise were correct, then Osborn's claim on the identity as Scribe D would be as strong as Marchaunt's. But the notion that these pages hold particular importance and thus would have been written by the common clerk or chamber clerk finds no historical authority. "In a similar situation, John Carpenter, common clerk, wrote a significant portion at the beginning of Letter Book K," they write,³¹ but Carpenter's hand is found in the bulk of the closing folios of K's predecessor Letter Book I and of the Plea and Memoranda Rolls 48–51 (former refs. A47–A50), dating between 1418 and 1422.³² His copying of entries in 1422 in Letter Book K was a continuation of duties in which he had been engaged for years, and says nothing about the importance of the folios on which they appear.

"The final piece of evidence for our identification of John Marchaunt as Scribe D," which leads Kathryn Kerby-Fulton to remark that "Mooney and Stubbs are in the right ballpark on this identification at the very least,"³³ makes for one of the most intriguing moments in *Scribes and the City*. It is the appearance of the name "Jhon Marcant" next to an elaborate sketch of a vase, in the margin of fol. 180r of Harley 7334, one of D's early *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts reproduced as [Figure 15](#) above. "Marchaunt's name in the margin of a manuscript we believe to be copied by him must be more than coincidence," remark the authors, and at first glance the point appears unassailable. It is certainly not D's hand, though, even if their dating of it to the fifteenth century, rather than Manly and Rickert's and the British Library's sixteenth century, is correct.³⁴ Mooney and Stubbs suggest that the inscription "may have been added by a later owner or user who knew the manuscript's provenance," its appearance next to the line *And as ze louep me kepeþ it secre* perhaps relating "to the common clerk's need to keep the city's affairs private."³⁵ The logic, again, moves in a circle: because Harley 7334 is in Marchaunt's hand, his name's presence in it cannot be a coincidence, confirming that it is in his hand. Whatever the case, the assumption that a medieval reader would thus commemorate a scribe, like the notion of the "importance" of a Letter Book's opening pages, is so far as I know original to Mooney and Stubbs. Were the name

an unusual one like “Adam Pynkhurst” we might take this to be the unique known instance of the phenomenon, but “John Merchant” appears everywhere.³⁶ Manly and Rickert’s suggestion that this name has to do with the series of inscriptions connecting this manuscript’s ownership to the family of Sir John Brograve seems to me more plausible, as being grounded in a widely attested phenomenon, though it, too, must remain speculative.³⁷

Still, there is a connection to be made between this name and D’s work, even if the true story behind it, which must be rather interesting, remains obscure. As Mooney and Stubbs comment in a footnote, the name, abbreviated to “Jhon Marka,” had already appeared in the manuscript in a different hand, again dated to the sixteenth century by Manly-Rickert and the British Library catalogue.³⁸ The inscription that the authors treat as evidence supporting their identification, on fol. 180r, appears next to mention of the *gret enuye* of men, while this earlier instance, on fol. 144r, is next to the Merchant’s description of the *Jalousie* of January, which *was so outrageous* that he would not suffer *May to ryde or go / But if þat he had hond on hir alway*. Whoever associated John the Merchant or “Jhon Marcant” with envy – for that is clearly what prompted these two marginal inscriptions – had plenty of company in focusing on this topic: so did Chaucer, both here and in the *Parson’s Tale*, and Gower, in Book 2 of the *Confessio Amantis*, to stick just to those works copied by D.

Mooney and Stubbs note an anomaly arising from their series of attributions: that, while Marchaunt “could well have had time for copying literary manuscripts in the 1380s and 1390s, when he served as chamber clerk 1380–99, as an attorney in the city’s court 1380–93, and probably as Henry Perot’s clerk up to 1394 ... only a few of his literary manuscripts have been dated to this period,” while conversely, the rest of D’s enormous body of copying dates to the era in which Marchaunt had his heaviest responsibilities.³⁹ If D did produce any or all of the items attributed to him in *Scribes and the City*, then, his career seems to have foreshadowed that of his peer the Hm 114 scribe in that it was after leaving the Guildhall that he took up literary copying in earnest.

A second anomaly with the identification of D as Marchaunt concerns the language of his manuscripts. On the one hand Marchaunt was among the most powerful and well-connected men of London, who in this narrative knew Gower and even possibly Langland and who might have “had access to early copies of some tales during Chaucer’s lifetime,” who was even the driving force behind the burgeoning literary scene.⁴⁰ On the other, just about all the material he copied, all but the Gowers, was sourced from so much western material that early commentators assumed he was

from the Langland country.⁴¹ D's main *Piers* text, unlike Pynkhurst's, consists of "a core of forms common to London and Worcestershire texts of ca. 1400"; the *Polychronicon* to which he contributed (BL Add. MS 27944), says Hanna, "must derive from a copy which Thomas [Berkeley] caused to be taken from Trevisa's holograph and which he supplied for transcription," locating its origins in Gloucestershire; the language of his *Brut* is replete with westernisms;⁴² and the textual traditions to which his two *Canterbury Tales* copies, Harley 7334 (Ha4) and Corpus Christi 198 (Cp), belong "appear to derive, at least in part, from Western archetypes."⁴³ If D was indeed the Londoner Marchaunt, this is an extraordinary difficulty awaiting explanation.

In sum, there is no support for the identification of D as Marchaunt, and abundant reason to reject it. The most we can say is that D might have worked in the Guildhall at the beginning of Henry IV's reign, itself an important possibility which we owe entirely to Mooney and Stubbs. But with Marchaunt joining Osborn as a senior officer of the Guildhall with no attested interest in Middle English literature, the core of their argument about that institution's role in promulgating Northampton's and Gaunt's vision of an England invested in the vernacular fades away.⁴⁴ The case that the Guildhall hosted, or incubated, any sustained copying of Chaucer and Gower by its clerks comes down to two figures, the first of whom alone would be enough to ensure the institution's centrality to any history of the production of vernacular literature in London ca. 1400.

Adam Pynkhurst, Guildhall Clerk?

The real bombshell of *Scribes and the City*, its addition of a bona fide celebrity to the scene, throws up a final stumbling block to the viability of the Marchaunt identification. "It is difficult to understand why Marchaunt and Pinkhurst, who were both working at or near the Guildhall, did not confer on the development of the texts and the construction, or alteration, of manuscripts of the *Tales*."⁴⁵ The difficulty alluded to here lies not in the western language of Cp and Ha4, unmentioned in *Scribes and the City*, but in the extraordinary differences in such matters as tale order and the inclusion of *The Tale of Gamelyn* in D's but not B's copies, which led Doyle and Parkes to conclude that "these two scribes cannot have worked together in a single establishment which had prepared and retained a single definitive exemplar of either" the *Confessio* or the *Canterbury Tales*.⁴⁶ Without addressing the evidence that leads their predecessors to that conclusion, Mooney and Stubbs nevertheless assert that these clerks worked in a single

establishment with *two* definitive exemplars of Chaucer's poem. This remarkable situation is forced upon them by their claim to "have found Adam Pynkhurst's hand in a number of London Guildhall documents, showing that he held some clerkly position at the Guildhall at least during the reign of Henry IV and possibly earlier."⁴⁷ This identification has recently been brought to bear on arguments as to the historicity of "Adam Scryveyne" and thus of Pynkhurst's status as "Chaucer's scribe."⁴⁸ On the terms within which the book operates, this case is anomalous in that, while Osborn, Marchaunt, and Carpenter are amply attested in surviving Guildhall records, Pynkhurst is nowhere in them. If he was a clerk, it was in a junior capacity akin to what I take to have been the Hm 114 scribe's.

The documents attributed to Pynkhurst consist of four entries of 1406–10 into Letter Book I (tops of fols. 36r, 62v, 87r, 98r), to which the authors would have added a fifth, top of fol. 99r, had they noticed that it matched 98r perfectly. Yet Simon Horobin has already observed both that the authors "understate the differences considerably" between the two excerpts they reproduce, from folios 36r and 87r, and that they "fail to note the much more frequent use of alternative forms." "Even where Pynkhurst's typical letter-forms do appear," he concludes, "they look very different from those found elsewhere."⁴⁹ The same goes for all the items on their list save 98r and 99r's similarities with each other. These entries resemble the hands of neither Trinity B.15.17 nor Hengwrt and Ellesmere. Indeed the first text they attribute to this scribe, 36r, appears in my list of the Hm 114 scribe's items in the [previous chapter](#) on the grounds that it has his characteristic aspect and all the distinctive letter forms there discussed. It is a specimen of his most formal script.

It seems certain that Mooney and Stubbs attributed this and the three other entries, all at the tops of their folios, to Pynkhurst because they all begin with double-slash and dot motifs on the central vertical lobe and top extension of a similar-looking **D**. In "Chaucer's Scribe" such a feature had been Pynkhurst's "signature," and early in *Scribes and the City* the authors still say that his "twirly knots adorning ascenders and elaborate decoration are immediately recognizable," but when it comes to identifying his work in Letter Book I they cite these motifs merely as examples of his "tendency to over-elaboration," perhaps an implicit acknowledgment that in fact Mooney's earlier approach was untenable.⁵⁰ Whatever the case, its appearance here and on all these other folios needs to be considered in a larger context. A blank space is left for such an ornamental initial letter on fol. 86r, and the ink of the equivalent initial letter on fol. 135r is in a different color from that of the main text, suggesting that these items were

later additions, either by a separate hand, which would explain why the form does not recur in the Hm 114 scribe's other entries, or as an addition by each clerk, who was provided with a model, which would explain why the ones on these folios take the same basic form but look different from each other in shape and even treatment of the dots, folio 98r's **D** having only two – circles, actually, since they are not filled in – 87r's, eight, while the dots on 62v's rest on the line rather than sitting atop it.

The appearance of this identical elaborate initial **D** some thirty times in the Deeds and Wills rolls from 1410 to 1416 complicates matters further.⁵¹ Mooney and Stubbs had been able to assign all Pynkhurst's governmental work to the period of B's literary copying, during which these few Letter Book entries, the latest dating to 1410, fit nicely. This was more plausible than Mooney's earlier extension of his career to 1427 on the grounds of her then-attribution of all double-slash-and-dot motifs in the Mercers' Account Book to him. But the only evidence for his placement in the Guildhall, these bloated **D**'s with the extenders and vertical strokes adorned by the double-slash and dot motif, would now lengthen his Guildhall career by six years, a period in which no literary manuscripts in his hand survive. It would be odd that he used the motif in so many elegant variations in Trinity B.15.17 let alone Ellesmere but only in this single, rather unattractive manner some thirty-five times over the course of his final decade of clerical work. In sum, there are no indications that either Scribe B or Adam Pynkhurst was a Guildhall clerk.

Frampton Comes Alive

"Richard Frampton was a freelance commercial scribe who worked in the period c. 1390–c. 1420," remarks Malcolm Parkes. "He signed one book, and is recorded in accounts as the scribe of two other surviving books which must have been copied at Westminster."⁵² Parkes lists seven extant manuscripts in his hand,⁵³ and Mooney and Stubbs add three: Thomas Favent's history of the Merciless Parliament of 1388 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. Rolls 9) and two copies of the *Inspeximus* of 1 Henry IV, one charter 50 in the London Metropolitan Archives and the other, a copy of that item, in the *Liber Albus*, to which the Hm 114 scribe adds an index and headers.⁵⁴ I am convinced by all three of these new attributions, the final of which definitely connects Frampton to the Guildhall in some capacity. A tantalizing additional factor, as Mooney and Stubbs observe, is that one of Frampton's manuscripts, Cambridge University Library MS Mm.5.14, includes a copy of the *Siege of Jerusalem* that is genetically partnered with

that in Lambeth 491, copied by the Hm 114 scribe.⁵⁵ From this evidence, remark Mooney and Stubbs, “it appears that Frampton had some kind of link to the Guildhall clerical staff, or perhaps may have served in its office in the 1390s before becoming a full-time Lancastrian employee.”⁵⁶ Yet according to Parkes, Mm.5.14 was “produced either between 1407 and 1412, or after 1416, when Frampton was not occupied with the commissions from the Duchy of Lancaster.”⁵⁷ As for the Lambeth 491/Hm 114 scribe, there is only one known document in his hand from prior to 1402, and none between mid-1411 and mid-1415, while William Kellaway dates all his work on the *Liber Albus*, including the provision of the contents for this *Inspeximus*, to the period 1417–19 (see [Chapter 4, note 34](#)). Lambeth 491 could have been begun prior to 1414, but it and Hm 114 were more likely produced ca. 1420–40. Whatever the case, much of its *Siege of Jerusalem* was copied after an “apparently fairly protracted” period of time following the completion of its *Brut*, the opening text.⁵⁸ In sum, if we are to take the genetic partnership between Lambeth 491’s and Mm.5.14’s respective *Sieges* as suggestive of a close connection between Frampton and our Guildhall clerk, the date has to be after 1416, and most likely the 1420s, two decades later than the date proposed by Mooney and Stubbs.

But the other connection between the Lambeth 491/Hm 114 scribe and Frampton does not support the notion that these clerks worked in concert. This concerns the table of contents, running titles, and marginal glosses that the former clerk added to the latter’s *Inspeximus* in the *Liber Albus*, which Mooney and Stubbs date to ca. 1399–1400, providing further evidence, so they say, “that the government office where Frampton had been employed before he was taken on permanently by the Lancastrian chancery was in fact the London Guildhall.”⁵⁹ Yet the Lambeth 491/Hm 114 scribe’s additions, notes Kellaway, were made ca. 1417–19. Even if the end point of Kellaway’s dating of Frampton’s work to before July 1414 is accurate ([Chapter 4, note 34](#)), there is still a gap of at least three years between these scribes’ respective work on the production. The case that Frampton was a Guildhall clerk cannot rely on his presumed relationship with the subject of the [previous chapter](#). Its final hope is Mooney and Stubbs’s argument that this *Inspeximus* was “originally prepared as a separate piece, a separate booklet, perhaps specifically commissioned for insertion in the *Liber Albus*,” which, because he “needed access to the archives where the city’s charters were stored,” makes it “clear that he was at that time a clerk of the Guildhall.”⁶⁰ If one can call a professional scribe brought in to perform a single and specific job “a clerk of” the institution that has commissioned him, and if one accepts their dating of its production to ca. 1400 rather

than as late as 1414, perhaps this is accurate; but elsewhere the authors use that term to mean a clerk whose main employment was at the Guildhall, and that dating is the result, not the foundation, of the proposal that he was a Guildhall clerk. Nor does Frampton's hand appear in any of the Guildhall legal productions – the Plea and Memoranda Rolls, Deeds and Wills, Mayor's Court, etc. – or the Letter Books, in at least one of which is found each of the hands of the Hm 114 scribe, D (perhaps), and Carpenter (on whom see below).

The simplest explanation of the surviving evidence is that the City commissioned Frampton to copy the *Inspeximus* sometime before 1414, which he might well have done in the Guildhall; that the Hm 114 scribe added his materials ca. 1417–19; and that these two scribes separately gained access to the identical exemplar of the *Siege of Jerusalem* (or copies of that archetype), the latter almost certainly in the 1420s or later, the former between 1407 and 1412 or after 1416 as Parkes suggested. Yet we can conclude our discussion of Frampton by observing that if nevertheless he was a Guildhall clerk, his career does not fit *Scribes and the City's* argument that the Guildhall was cradle of vernacular literature, given that the *Siege* is the sole Middle English work to be found in the ten or more productions in his hand. Aside from the next chapter's focus, Thomas Hoccleve, Frampton is the most prominent of the "other scribes associated with the Guildhall," indeed the only one with any known direct connection with that institution at all, the rest being instead associated with the individual livery companies.⁶¹

John Carpenter

John Carpenter is one of the great figures of fifteenth-century London literary, political, and cultural life. In addition to serving the City of London as common clerk from 1417 to 1438, he compiled the *Liber Albus* to which the Hm 114 scribe and Frampton contributed, commissioned a painting of a Dance of Death in the cloister of St. Paul's Cathedral and accompanying translations by John Lydgate, and oversaw the building of the Guildhall Library from funds left by Richard Whittington and William Bury.⁶² To this list of major accomplishments Mooney and Stubbs add that Carpenter "demonstrates that even the busiest and wealthiest of the clerks of the Guildhall in this period found time for copying Middle English manuscripts."⁶³ Yet the authors quickly back away from this claim: in fact Carpenter "was probably doing his literary copying before 1417 while working as a clerk under John Marchaunt," so that if he did copy the

“Campsall manuscript” of the *Troilus* (New York, Morgan Library and Museum MS M.817) and one of the Gowers (Philadelphia, Rosenbach Museum and Library MS 1083/29), as they argue, it was well before he became so busy and wealthy.⁶⁴ As for the other Gower here attributed to him, Cambridge University Library MS Dd.8.19, *Scribes and the City* says nothing about its date and it seems to be included in their reference to his pre-1417 work, but in *medievalscribes.com* the authors place it in the era 1440–65, so if the attribution is accurate, Carpenter most likely produced it between his retirement from the Guildhall in 1438 and his death in 1442. He might well have done so in the Guildhall close – he “is likely to have managed the [Guildhall] library until his death in 1442”⁶⁵ – but even if all the attributions were accurate, his career would not support the broader conclusion that the Guildhall was a major site of copying by senior clerks.

Carpenter helpfully signed a number of his bureaucratic documents, either with “Carpenter” or with a “C” as in the item from Letter Book I in the top item of [Figure 16](#).

His hand is frequently found in the later years covered by Letter Book I, and is recognizable because he tends “to square off the bowls of letters, producing angular shapes where curves should be,” as in the **o** of *chose* line 2 and **a**’s of *vagarauntz* final line of that item; the tops of his ascenders “are sometimes squared rather than arched” (**s** in *cest* final line); and his elaborate initials often include the “decorative trick” of “the zig-zag in the lobe of **P**” inaugurating its first line.⁶⁶ Mooney and Stubbs present specimens of his hand from Letter Book I and the *Liber Albus*, to which we can add, as noted above, the bulk of the Plea and Memoranda Rolls from 1418 to 1422, whose roll 50 opens with an initial letter whose “full-blown cadels” very closely match those of the “Carpenter” on fol. iv of the *Liber Albus* (see second item of this figure), confirming Mooney and Stubbs’s claim that the latter was not a sixteenth-century addition, as Kellaway believed, but “was almost certainly written in the fifteenth century, and by Carpenter himself.”⁶⁷

Things are less straightforward, however, with regard to the three literary manuscripts newly assigned to him by *Scribes and the City*. In my judgment one of these attributions is quite likely, and the book’s great triumph; one is possible but unlikely; and the third is almost certainly not his. The attribution I deem likely is the Cambridge *Confessio*, probably produced in the final years of his life, whose text’s aspect is very similar to the specimens of Carpenter’s hand in the *Liber Albus*, such as the important passage regarding positions of the chamberlain and clerk of the chamberlain in [Figure 17](#), discussed in [Chapter 4](#).

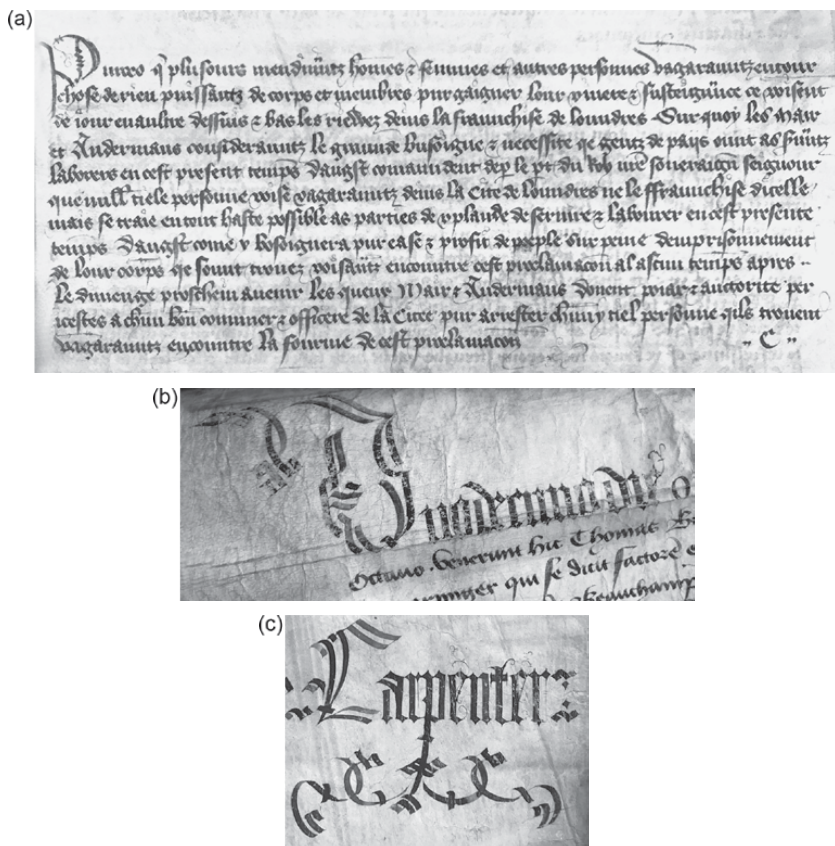


Figure 16 London Guildhall entries, hand of John Carpenter.
 London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, (a) City of London,
 COL/AD/01/009, Letter Book I, fol. 212r; (b) CLA/024/01/02/050
 (former ref. A49), membr. 1r; (c) COL/CS/01/012, *Liber Albus*, fol. 1v.

This *Confessio* shares with the Guildhall custumal identical letter forms like **C** with vertical lobe extending below the line (*Cuius* left column Book I, line 4 of Mooney and Stubbs's Fig. 5.9; *Chaumbirleyn* Fig. 17 line 2 etc.), flat-topped **g** (*agone* left, last line; *preigne* Fig. 17 bottom left), and secretary **a** with squared-off bowl. Its zigzag motif on **E** in *Explicit* on left and **A** forms in lines 2 and 5 right match Figure 16's initial **P** and in *Audermus* lines 4 and 10. As noted above, CUL Dd.8.19 has conventionally been dated (including by Mooney, Horobin, and Stubbs) to ca. 1440–65, which can be altered to “before 1442” if Mooney and Stubbs's attribution is accurate.

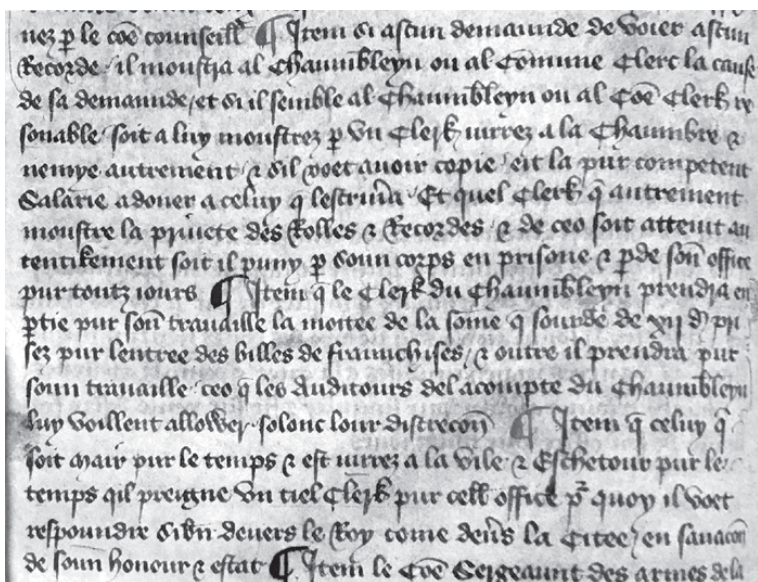


Figure 17 Passage on Guildhall clerks' roles, *Liber Albus*, hand of John Carpenter. London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, COL/CS/01/012, *Liber Albus*, fol. 17v.

"A. I. Doyle called [the authors'] attention to the similarity between the script in these signed entries in Letter Book I and that in Pierpont Morgan M.817, the Campsall manuscript of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* which may have belonged to Henry V."⁶⁸ The scripts are indeed similar, but only, to my eye, in the way that the Trinity B.15.17 *Piers Plowman* and the Ellesmere *Canterbury Tales* are similar. The aspect shares much in common with Carpenter's work in Letter Book I, which is quite a bit spikier than his smoother *Liber Albus* hand. But even the spikiness of his formal Letter Book I entries does not extend to the lobes and ascenders of his **b**, **f**, **h**, **k**, **l**, and long **s**, which in this *Troilus* "are not rounded but are broken into two strokes plus a hairline," or of **v** and **w**, which "have very tall left strokes, finished at the top with a pattern of strokes like that seen on the ascenders," as seen in almost every line of his work.⁶⁹ It might be possible to say that this is what a formal literary hand of Carpenter's would look like, except that we seem already to have that in the Cambridge Gower. To include this in his corpus would necessitate explaining the hand's differences from that document as well. The attribution is not impossible, but as with the Trinity B.15.17/Ellesmere situation

no compelling reasons to assign these manuscripts to one scribe, rather than to two, present themselves. If this is his, it precedes his position as common clerk, since Henry V's coat of arms on folio 1r must predate 1413.

The last of Mooney and Stubbs's three literary attributions to Carpenter, the *Confessio Amantis* in Rosenbach 1083/29, comes closest to his hand in its top-line cadels, though even those do not look much like his. Other significant differences include the loop on the left of most A's, the S shape, and the I quite far from that "with curved approach forming a completed lobe and with a stalk that splits into two strands but joins up again at the top" as Carpenter usually employs.⁷⁰ The force of these latter two attributions never lay in their aspects and the like. By the logic of *Scribes and the City's* structure, if Osborn, Marchaunt, and Pynkhurst copied vernacular literature, then surely Carpenter, whose combination of bureaucratic and literary bona fides exceeded theirs by far, must have done likewise. But of the nearly twenty surviving literary manuscripts that Mooney and Stubbs claim were produced by Guildhall clerks while in that capacity, only one, Cambridge Dd.8.19, stands up to scrutiny, and might be dated to the years after its scribe had departed that institution. This is an important attribution, but by itself provides little support for Mooney and Stubbs's argument that the Guildhall was a cradle of Middle English.

The Guildhall as Repository?

Mooney and Stubbs envision a Guildhall with "multiple exemplars accessible to the scribes over several decades," one which "must have been a repository for works of vernacular literature from at least the very beginning of the fifteenth century, and probably earlier, in the last decades of Richard II's reign when these authors were actively writing and these city clerks were rising through the ranks at the Guildhall."⁷¹ An important mechanism for this promulgation of Lancastrian England's policy of using the vernacular to reach the commons, indeed its manifestation, they assert, was the construction of the Guildhall library, built between 1423 and 1425: "We think there may be significance in the fact that" this is when Osborn undertook Lambeth 491 and Hm 114: might the volumes Carpenter deposited in that library "include volumes of Middle English literature such as he copied many years before?"⁷²

The stakes of *Scribes and the City*, then, extend well beyond the local issue of whether any given clerk was copying Chaucer. This association of these clerks' copying with England's language policy "is an attractive hypothesis," as Pamela Robinson remarks,⁷³ which therefore merits attention on

its own terms, leaving behind for the moment the problems this and the [previous chapter](#) identify with the individual identifications. First, then, there can be no proving or disproving the possibility that the establishment of the Guildhall library was part of a larger movement that had been aligned with Northampton and Gaunt, so the authors' use of the conditional and interrogative moods is appropriate. Carpenter's will directed that the volumes he left were to be "chained in that library, under such form that the visitors and students thereof may be the sooner admonished to pray for my soul,"⁷⁴ yet so far as I am aware none of the extant copies of Middle English literature they identify as having been copied by Guildhall clerks shows any signs of having been chained (though of course few original bindings remain). Neither do they have inscriptions of the sort found in the one manuscript unquestionably from the library's fifteenth-century collection, MS 3042, a thirteenth-century copy of Petrus de Riga's *Aurora*.⁷⁵ That volume is Latin and Biblical, in accordance with the ample interest in Latin and French religious works displayed in his will: Anselm, anti-Lollard tracts, Alain de Lille, articles of the faith, the parables of Solomon, and so forth.⁷⁶ Although this institution has recently been described as "the first purely secular library, founded by and intended for London's merchant class,"⁷⁷ archaeology joins the evidence of Carpenter's will in showing that this is inaccurate. As David Bowsheer, Tony Dyson, Nick Holder, and Isca Howell observe,

It might at first seem more likely that the entrance [to the library] was on the Guildhall yard side at the west end, but the location of the latrine pit at this end would argue against this. Furthermore, the library clearly functioned as part of the [Guildhall] College precinct and seems to have been used primarily by the College priests rather than by the citizenry at large; thus it would have been more convenient to have the main entrance at the east end, only 20m from the College accommodation block and less than 10m from the chapel.⁷⁸

In sum, all indications are that the Guildhall library was intended to house the works of Petrus de Riga and Augustine of Hippo rather than John Gower or Geoffrey Chaucer.

Conversely, the evidence found in the volumes discussed in *Scribes and the City* does not support the hypothesis that this flourishing of vernacular literature coincided with the building of the library. Mooney and Stubbs seem to refer obliquely to the Guildhall library in saying that Osborn was "merely compiling texts for a library of exemplars (or for his own use) rather than fulfilling commissions for clients," but this main claim seems unlikely: as both Ralph Hanna and Noelle Phillips have shown, the

manuscripts' codicology and textual formation indicate that Lambeth 491 and Hm 114 were produced for their scribe's private use.⁷⁹ Of greater potential relevance are the textual affiliations of some of the texts in Hm 114 and Lambeth 491 with copies produced by scribes with potential Guildhall connections, which lead Mooney and Stubbs to suggest the Guildhall close as "the locale where both Osborn and Frampton gained access to a common exemplar."⁸⁰ Yet as noted above, while Richard Frampton and the Hm 114 scribe seem to have used the identical exemplar of the *Siege of Jerusalem*, nothing indicates the Guildhall as site of their access. A portion of the Hm 114 *Piers Plowman* text has intriguing affiliations with the Ilchester Prologue produced by Scribe D, Mooney and Stubbs's Marchaunt, leading them to suggest "that multiple exemplars of some texts, like *Piers Plowman*, were accessible to clerks at the Guildhall for a considerable period."⁸¹ Again, though, this proposal would provide intriguing support for an argument established on other grounds; but the existence of other viable sites in which exemplars might have been kept, such as Westminster, Southwark, the livery companies, or private collections, denudes the proposal of evidentiary status.

The *Piers Plowman* situation, in particular, raises more questions than it answers. For the Ilchester and Hm 114 copies in fact share in common not an exemplar, but only "several inserted passages ... each an integral discourse on a distinct topic, [which] could have been accommodated on one side of a leaf, or on two sides, or on a piece of membrane."⁸² Hm 114's *Piers* is a conflated copy of all three versions, its C material in its earlier portion seemingly affiliated with the X family, though not necessarily with Ilchester itself, but its later portions instead with the P family (see [Chapter 4, note 71](#)). These two copies do not have the relationship one would expect from siblings born in the same household. Mooney and Stubbs have Scribes B and D of Tr as Guildhall colleagues, but they acknowledge the oddity that neither seems to have consulted the other when copying *The Canterbury Tales*. By the same token, they have it that the Hm 114 scribe (their Osborn), his supervisor Carpenter, and Pynkhurst all copied the *Troilus* in the Guildhall but from three different exemplars.⁸³ And their Marchaunt, Pynkhurst, and Carpenter, so far as surviving evidence indicates, showed no interest in Mandeville, *Three Kings of Cologne*, the *Siege of Jerusalem*, *Susannah*, or anything not by Chaucer or Langland now found in Lambeth 491 and Hm 114.

The only possible evidence that a literary manuscript might have been produced by an active rather than former or future Guildhall clerk inheres in the single Gower manuscript now in Cambridge University Library.

This does not constitute evidence against the Guildhall clerks' inclusion in the networks in which Chaucer, Gower, Langland, and Trevisa were read and reproduced. The Hm 114 scribe and perhaps D went back and forth between that institution and other venues where they copied vernacular literature. But the attempt to fit so much disparate evidence into a Guildhall framework is akin to the subordination of all other pertinent methodologies on which these identifications depend to paleography alone. Both are better seen as parts of much larger historical forces. [Chapter 4](#) pointed to the Goldsmiths' Hall and the other livery companies as one disparate group affiliated with the Guildhall; Mooney has elsewhere argued for the liberties within the City precincts (e.g., Blackfriars, Holy Trinity at Aldgate) and the areas beyond its limits (Fleet Street west of Temple Bar, Westminster) as sites of scribal production by foreigners or those not in the companies of the Scriveners or Textwriters; and recent archival discoveries by Martha Carlin and Sebastian Sobecki point to Southwark as an important site of Middle English textual production.⁸⁴ What is needed now is a comprehensive history of the textual production of the late-medieval metropolis. That is a history in which a single figure looms larger than all scribes of the Guildhall together, a man who worked with B and D, who had a hand in the Hengwrt manuscript, and was one of the most widely read poets of the early fifteenth century: Thomas Hoccleve, subject of this book's final chapter.

Hoccleve's Hengwrt, Hoccleve's Holographs

Thomas Hoccleve: clerk of the Privy Seal, poet, and scribe. For a workaday figure in an era not celebrated for its great literature, that is a respectable list of identities. But it hardly makes him central to English literary history. He often complained about ill treatment in the office. The poems in which he did so prompt such characterizations as the “naïve outpourings of his own hopes and fears ... presented to us in all their crude immediacy” and conclusions as that “the Chaucerian music, which he tried to imitate, eluded him completely.”¹ Even the idiosyncratic script in which he recorded that poetry set him apart from the attractive Anglicana hands of Ellesmere, Harley 3943, Harley 7334, and the rest. Through ca. 1977 this was the framework for any comparison of Hoccleve with the cosmopolitan London poets of the previous generation and the scribes of his own day. The following year, though, his fortunes suddenly shifted. A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, in what has been called “The Essay That Started a Field,” identified Hoccleve as Scribe E on the Trinity R.3.2 copy of the *Confessio Amantis*.² Hoccleve, it was now apparent, copied not just Hoccleve but also Gower, and did so alongside the most prominent scribes of his day and age, Scribes B, who produced Hengwrt and Ellesmere, and D, who had recorded the works of Chaucer, Langland, Trevisa, and especially Gower.

In the following year Doyle and Parkes revealed an even closer link between Thomas Hoccleve and Chaucer himself, identifying him as the most likely candidate as Hand F of the Hengwrt *Canterbury Tales*, who filled in some blank lines and half-lines on folios 83v, 138v, and 150r.³ An index to the implications of this “far-reaching” discovery is David Lawton’s suggestion, in 1985, that Hoccleve, not Chaucer, might have composed the links surrounding the *Merchant’s* and *Squire’s Tales*.⁴ Within a decade Derek Pearsall was advocating “the view that Hoccleve had something to do with preparing the *Canterbury Tales* for publication,” drawing connections between the similarities of annotation and layout in Ellesmere and certain manuscripts of Hoccleve’s *Regiment of Princes*.⁵ And Hoccleve’s importance

to our sense of literary production ca. 1400–20, as poet, scribe, and supervisor, has only gathered momentum. “Thomas Hoccleve has undergone a lot of rehabilitation lately,” quipped Sarah Tolmie in 2007,⁶ and that was before the explosion of his scribal corpus by over 1000 items in the National Archives and a holograph of the *Regiment*; before his nomination as supervisor not just of El but also of both Tr and Hg; and before the proposal that he took dictation direct from Chaucer and worked closely with Gower.⁷

For their attributions, Doyle and Parkes simply matched the hand of the Hoccleve holographs with those of the Trinity Gower's Scribe E and Hengwrt's Hand F. By the time of Simon Horobin's intervention, however, whereby Hoccleve was also supervisor of Hg and thus “Chaucer's first editor,” the focus had shifted to the questions of whether items that Doyle and Parkes had explicitly excluded from his scribal corpus were nevertheless his, and what the implications of these new attributions were. This shift is crucial, and not just to the question of Hoccleve's role in the production and dissemination of the *Confessio Amantis* and *Canterbury Tales* in the early fifteenth century, major though those topics certainly are. For if Hoccleve's connections with the copying of Chaucer's, Gower's, and his own poetry alone constituted a challenge to the thesis that the Guildhall was the cradle of Middle English literature, his prolific and wide-ranging scribal activity balanced that challenge by giving rise to the methodology that enabled both the argument of *Scribes and the City* and the idea that he was Chaucer's first editor. Whether the topic is the production of the *Canterbury Tales* ca. 1400 or the ways in which our discipline is changing shape, Thomas Hoccleve – his hand, his work in the Privy Seal, and his poetry – now needs to take center stage.

Thomas Hoccleve, Scribe

Doyle and Parkes's might have been the essay that started a field but it was H. C. Schulz's 1938 essay “Thomas Hoccleve, Scribe” that set out the basics of Middle English scribal attribution, as presented in two tight sentences: “Four letters, **A**, **g**, **w**, and **y**, have been selected as one of the tests for determining Hoccleve's handwriting. Individually, no one of these four can be said to be unique with Hoccleve, but as a group (and with identical slope, size, shading, position of pen, and degree of curvature) they have not been found to occur in any of the numerous Middle English hands so far examined.”⁸ Doyle describes these forms efficiently in the Early English Text Society's facsimile of the Hoccleve holographs:

an expansive **A** with a sweeping deep downwards stroke turning upwards counter-clockwise across itself as it turns clockwise either to a flattened head with an angular junction on the right with a straight broken downstroke or else continuing with a simple curve, in each with a more or less strongly seriffed foot; a flat-topped **g** with variant tails, turning either tightly or in a wide sweep on the left to its head or else turning back more or less sharply to the right; a round or oval **w** made usually with only two strokes, the second like a 2 within the circle; and **y** with its tail turning right up alongside or often back through the head as a hair stroke to make a dot or tick above.⁹

To these distinctive Hocclevean forms Doyle and Parkes add a fifth, “the letter **h** in which the stem, shoulder and limb drop below the level of the other letters.”¹⁰ The six manuscripts now universally taken to include Hoccleve’s hand feature this group of forms. All have very similar slope, size, shading, position of pen, and degree of curvature, that is, aspect and duct:¹¹

Hengwrt, fols. 83v line 24 from fourth term, 138v lines 25b–26, and

150r line 30: Hand F

The Trinity Gower, fols. 82r–84r (first column): Scribe E

Durham University Library MS Cosin v. 111.9: Hoccleve’s poetry

San Marino, Huntington Library MS Hm 111: Hoccleve’s poetry

San Marino, Huntington Library MS Hm 744: Hoccleve’s poetry

London, British Library Additional MS 24062: Hoccleve’s formulary
(majority of folios)

His contribution to the Trinity Gower, as Doyle and Parkes remark, is “[t]he most formal and constrained example of his handwriting in English,” with “a tighter, more upright and deliberate manner,” fewer ligatures, and greater angularity of the letters.¹² The distinctive combination of letter forms is here (Figure 18): “Agein” (1), “And” (2, 4), “goddes” (2), “gret” (7), “many” (3), “my weye” (final line).

Linne Mooney’s 2011 essay “A Holograph Copy of Thomas Hoccleve’s *Regiment of Princes*” both builds on and challenges the Schulz/Doyle-Parkes approach by adding one more manuscript to the list of Hoccleve’s holographs: BL MS Royal 17 D.xviii (Figure 19). This is a major announcement, from the perspectives of both Hoccleve studies, since the accepted holographs all contain his “minor” poetry, while the *Regiment* is undoubtedly “major,” and manuscript studies, given her substantially different methodology from that established by Schulz. The main burden of Mooney’s essay is to explain why “the hand of this manuscript differs somewhat in general aspect from that of the accepted Hoccleve holographs,”

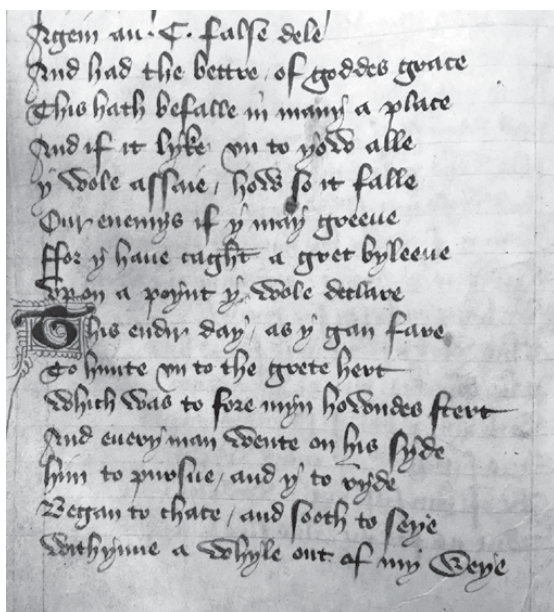


Figure 18 The Trinity Gower (Trinity R.3.2), hand of Scribe E, Thomas Hoccleve.
Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.2, fol. 83v, left column bottom.
By kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge.

which she identifies as the most important of her reasons for its neglect by critics.¹³ Mooney explains the difference in aspect by treating it as evidence for the change of his hand over time rather than against her identification in the first place. It shows, she claims, that Hoccleve employed “a script somewhere between that of the Trinity College MS R.3.2 of Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*,” which demonstrates the neater, smaller script he used “in his younger days,” “and the later holographs.”¹⁴

One might expect, then, to find that “all letter forms of the hand of Royal MS 17 D.xviii match exactly Hoccleve’s idiosyncratic letter forms,” as Mooney asserts, but in fact “the forms of **w** and **g**” – two of the four that enabled Schulz’s attribution in the first place – are, together with final **-e** and thorn, among the “most striking differences of letter forms from the later holographs.”¹⁵ Instead of the characteristic round **w** whose second stroke looks like a 2 within the circle, the Royal MS’s 5400-plus lines feature, as Daniel Wakelin says, a “lotus-flower **w** with a pointed tapering bottom and flattened loops above” that is “unlike Hoccleve’s” (“**swiche**” Fig. 19 line 1, “**war**” line 9),¹⁶ and the same goes for the flat-topped **g** found

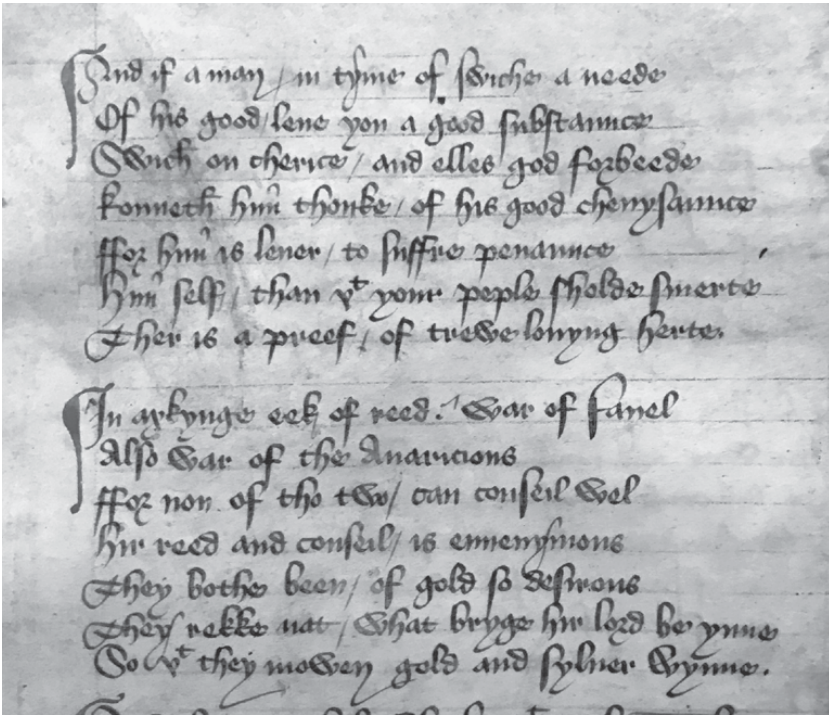


Figure 19 *Regiment of Princes* (Royal 17 D.XVIII), identified by Linne Mooney as Hoccleve holograph.

© The British Library Board, Royal MS 17 D.XVIII, fol. 90r, top half.

everywhere else, instead of which Royal features only a form with angular top (“good” 2 [x 2], 4). These differences alone call into question the proposal that Royal 17 D.XVIII is a holograph. To account for them Mooney says that “such forms [of **w**] with rounded bases” as here “can be found in his copying in the Trinity Gower” and that “this ‘**g**’ form with a pointed head” appears as well “in Hoccleve’s stint in Trinity R.3.2.”¹⁷ Yet his main **w** in the Trinity Gower, as seen in line 4 of Figure 18, is not the lotus one but rather the “more complex three-stroke bipartite **w** with angular feet ... employed chiefly in initial positions and for greater formality,”¹⁸ and she exemplifies the **g** in question with forms whose lower lobes, unlike Royal’s, do not meet the stalk. Other features distinctive to this manuscript include “the curling tail on the last minim of word-final **m** or **n**” (“man” 1; “mowen” 14) and “the broken strokes in the crossbar and tongue of **e**” (“swiche” 1), as noted by Wakelin.¹⁹ I am not convinced that the

similarities between the Royal manuscript and the authenticated Hoccleve texts are close enough to compensate for these substantial differences in aspect and letter forms.

Mooney's discussion of Trinity B.15.17 and Hg, too, had acknowledged a "difference ... in the aspect of the hands."²⁰ But that essay, unlike "A Holograph Copy," did not confront head-on the different letter forms of the respective manuscripts, instead presenting them as accepted variants by the same scribe on the assumption that the essay had established the attribution on other grounds. The methodology of the Hoccleve piece, whereby the identification can rest on agreement of the new item's dominant forms and the accepted corpus's minority forms, is that employed by Mooney and Stubbs in the Marchaunt, Pynkhurst, and Carpenter attributions a few years later. If this later approach strikes a rather different chord from that of "Chaucer's Scribe," though, the claim that the evidence behind her discovery of the holograph of the *Regiment* is "too weighty for any other conclusion" fits in well with the confident manner with which Mooney tends to present her new identifications,²¹ culminating in the conceit that "the lowly Royal 17 D.XVIII is somewhat similar to the Hengwrt manuscript of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, misdated and ignored until Tatlock pointed out that it was written by the same scribe as the grander Ellesmere manuscript, and, predating it, might offer as good a text or better of Chaucer's greatest work."²²

"As good a text or better": at the heart of the quest for Middle English scribal identities is the study of imaginative and historical literature, which comes to us not only in particular handwriting, the province of paleographic analysis, but also in a variety of dialects and orthographies. The attribution of Trinity B.15.17 to the Hg-El scribe offered readers of [Chapter 3](#) an occasion for important thinking about dialect, orthography, and grammar; the attempt to broaden the corpus of Hoccleve holographs again shines a light on such issues, as well as on the topic of textual affiliations, which are essential to determining the character of manuscript copies of poetry. Here, more than in claims of scribal supervision or explanations of why his signature **g** and **w** forms are absent from a supposed holograph, is where close attention to the case of Thomas Hoccleve matters most for the study of scribes and the City. Precisely because it concerns *poetry*, the proposal that Royal 17 D.XVIII is a holograph exposes the deeper, structural modes of history in which such paleographical attributions are inextricably enmeshed. The next few sections point to conclusions regarding the non-paleographical modes of evidence manifested in Royal 17 D.XVIII alternative to the conclusion Mooney identifies as the inevitable one.

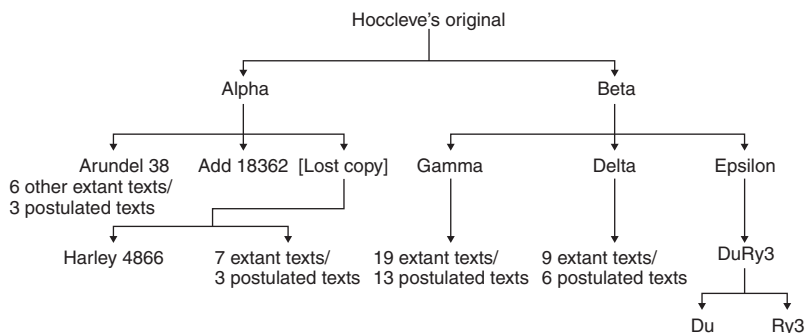


Figure 20 Précis of stemma of *Regiment of Princes* manuscripts, established by Marcia Smith Marzec.

The Textual Affiliations of Royal 17 D.XVIII (Ry3)

In Mooney's account Royal 17 D.XVIII is neither the putative authorial original of the *Regiment of Princes* nor merely an unexceptional copy far down the stemma that Hoccleve happened to copy. It is instead highlighted as the presentation copy for John of Lancaster, later duke of Bedford, a text that "represents a revised version of the poem written in 1412–13, in which the author had made alterations reflecting the changed circumstances of himself, of his dedicatee, Henry of Derby, and of the country a year or two after the completion and first dissemination of the poem."²³ Marcia Smith Marzec had characterized Ry3, the customary sigil for this manuscript's text, as representing "a distinct and quite early stage in the transmission of the *Regiment* texts";²⁴ Mooney pushes this characterization still further by rejecting Marzec's own conclusion that Ry3 is genetic partner with Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Dugdale 45 (Du), seeing it instead as the latter's ancestor. She thus positions Ry3 as Hoccleve's revision of the original, it and Du in its wake attesting "a separate branch of the stemma."²⁵ Figure 20 is a précis of Marzec's stemma, with Du and Ry3 on the far right, making up the epsilon family.²⁶

On the premise that she has established this manuscript's hand as Hoccleve's, and its text as set apart from all others (save Du), Mooney cites "significant changes to the text that are distinct from all other extant copies of the *Regiment*." Where they have it that Hoccleve worked at the Privy Seal "twenti yeer / And foure" and "three and twenti yeer and more," in the revision as represented by Ry3 he puts the figures at twenty-five years (804–805) and twenty-four years and more (1023). Likewise, the Old Man's

suggestion that "Syn **thow maist nat** be payed in th'eschequer" Hoccleve should request that the Prince "make instance / That thy patente into the hanaper / May chaunged be" (1877–80), "has been changed" in Ry3 to "Syn **it is hard** be payed in th'eschequer," which reflects "the better times," since he had been paid in the meantime.²⁷ But this is mistaken. For one, Ry3 and Du's other shared readings do not look much like revisions, and some are obviously erroneous, such as line 1307's claim that the rich man's stinginess "Suffrith his negheburgh by **him die**" [*recte* "him *sterve and die*"]. But that point is moot here anyway, as Ry3 and Du, which together constitute the epsilon family, in fact do not here record anything distinct from all other extant copies for lines 805 and 1023. Six of the eight extant copies of the delta group plus one conflated text agree with epsilon for both readings, as do a few other manuscripts for one or the other reading, and at line 1877 the number is still higher, with nearly all witnesses to the beta family, almost thirty of which are extant, sharing the reading.²⁸

Mooney has also misunderstood the evidence for the necessity of the epsilon exemplar, her rejection of which leaves open, so she believes, "the possibility that Royal 17 D.XV111 itself is the holograph presentation copy and that Dugdale was copied from it."²⁹ She has Marzec arguing "for the existence of a common exemplar, rather than the manuscripts being copied one from the other, because of a substantial passage" comprising five stanzas on Chaucer "that appears in Royal and not in Dugdale," which Marzec believed to have been removed from that exemplar between the former's and latter's respective copyings of it.³⁰ This is not an accurate reflection of the situation. Marzec considers it "doubtful that one is copied from the other" and "rather, [that] the two are copies of a common exemplar" not because Du lacks these stanzas, but because "numerous unique readings in each manuscript" reveal their descent from a common source.³¹ The most notable of Ry3's many unique errors, which could have landed Hoccleve in the Tower had he written it, is "The **kyng** is euer of wrecchid couetise / To coueite ay and have and nat souffise" (1175–76; *recte* "kynde"). This scribe sometimes nods for lines at a time, as when the Old Man tells Hoccleve, uniquely in Ry3, that his former prosperity blinded him so that

what God was I nothyng **vndestood**
 But ay whil þat I in my **helth** stood
 Aftir my flesshly lust my lyf I ledde
 And of his wreche nothyng **me** dredde.

[*recte* "vnderstood"]
 [*recte* "welthe"]

[*recte* "I me"]

(1320–23)

the second and third of which errors ruin the meter. Other omissions that do so, and often reverse the meaning of the line, include those of **ne** (859), **am** (1034), **nat** (1219), **thow** (1567), and **of** (1751). Another term omitting *r* is **Affican** (1150), while the list of Ry3's careless mistakes and nonsensical readings includes **shlode** (1737; *recte* "sholde"); **felee** (1160; *recte* "feble"); "he halt **is** gretter vice" (4609; *recte* "it"); and **grete grete** for *greet*, where the spelling, too, matters, here adding three extra syllables to the line (835; see below on Hoccleve's use of *-e*). The scribe got especially, and inexplicably, confused by this discussion of the way lords' wealth blinds them to the pain of the poor:

Welthe in the lordes **soil** blowith ful merie
 But the needy berith his **soule** so lowe
 Pat no wynd of confort may in it blowe.
 (4716–18; *recte* "sail" both)

It is difficult to imagine, on one side of the equation, any poet making so many blatant mistakes in the copying of his own words, or, on the other, the Du scribe knowing to correct all of his exemplar's – that is, the poet's – unique errors, especially those whose errancy is not so obvious.³² Marzec's judgment that Du and Ry3 are siblings stands up very well. There are no grounds for the belief that Royal 17 D.xviii was the Dugdale copy's ancestor and thus a presentation copy.

Spelling, Meter, and Unstressed <e>

Mooney suggests that there is one other body of evidence, "the language of the *Regiment* in Royal 17 D.xviii," which "also matches Hoccleve's usage in the known holographs."³³ As we saw in [Chapter 3](#), such a circumstance, if it existed, would constitute not evidence in favor of the argument but the absence of evidence against it. In any case, she immediately acknowledges that 94 of the 101 appearances of the term YOU in Royal 17 D.xviii are spelled *you*, with only seven spelled *yow*, even though, as Charles Blyth observes, in his holographs Hoccleve uniformly spelled this term "with a **w**, never a **u**," exemplifying the fact that the "great majority of words in his lexicon have a single spelling" in the holographs.³⁴ Mooney proposes instead that this is a "spelling that Hoccleve appears to have changed over his career," just as Horobin and she had said Scribe B must have done regarding *though* and *through* between his copying of Trinity B.15.17 and the Chaucer manuscripts.³⁵

Ry3 also contains a substantial number of unmetrical, and thus unHocclevean, lines. Those lines missing a word as cited above are obvious instances, but more telling are those lines that betray the scribe's failure to understand Hoccleve's metrical scheme and treatment of unstressed <e>. Judith Jefferson shows that, "where the controversy over the possible pronunciation of final *-e* does not arise" in the holograph texts, "that is those lines which have no internal final *-e*," which make up 35 percent of the total, no fewer than 98 percent have ten (or eleven, including extra-metrical feminine endings) syllables.³⁶ Yet the "strongest argument" that Hoccleve wrote decasyllables, she says, arises from "the quite clear evidence provided by the holograph manuscripts that Hoccleve made use of a variety of stratagems, made choices from amongst the options available to him in order to maintain his decasyllabic line," such as optional elision of unstressed vowels (e.g., *therl* / *the Erl*), optional use of pleonastic *þat* (*as* / *as þat*), variation in the form of adverbs (*whenne* / *whens*), and varying forms of verbal inflexion (*-e* / *-eth*; *fownden* / *fownde*).³⁷ All of these rely on the pronunciation of <e> in unstressed positions.³⁸ As a consequence, readings lacking a necessary *-e* or adding an unnecessary one must be taken as scribal.

What this means is that "But ay whil þat I in my **helth** stood," quoted above, attests not only the wrong word but also the wrong syllable count (1321; *recte* "welthe").³⁹ In "Write to him a **goodely** tale or two / On which he may **desport** him by nyght" (1902–1903), the first line is eleven syllables thanks to an extraneous medial *-e*, absent from Ry3's genetic partner Du, while the second is nine, on account of the scribe's adherence to Hoccleve's practices. "Following the verb *may*," Jefferson discovered, "there are 44 instances of infinitives followed by a vowel, 36 of which end in *-e* and 8 in *-en*, in every case in accordance with the demands of the syllable count."⁴⁰ Line 1903 must read *may desporten*, and there is little support for the notion that Hoccleve would have made the type of mistake found in Ry3. The two best texts, Arundel 38 and Harley 4866, get many of these lines right, such as "Wryte to hym a **goodly** tale or two / On whyche he may **desporten** hym by nyght."⁴¹ The frequency with which such forms occur means that Ry3 has a large handful of twelve-syllable lines as well as the more common nine- or eleven-syllable ones.⁴² Over its Prologue of 2016 lines, the Royal copy has 244 non-decasyllabic lines, just over 12 percent, six times as many as we would expect in a holograph. It would seem difficult to attribute to the Harley and Arundel scribes a more fine-tuned approach to the syllabic character of Hoccleve's line than his own at this early date. Nor would the suggestion that the poet introduced these alterations to a text that was already correct, and that they survived only in Ry3, be very convincing.

Scribal attribution is part of a broad network of modes of knowledge. Mooney's hope "that future editors of the *Regiment* will take account of the authorial readings from this manuscript written by the poet himself" will sound familiar to her readers: the attribution of Trinity B.15.17 to Scribe B "has further implications for ... its adoption by editors as the base text"; the identification of the Hm 114 scribe as Osborn leads Mooney and Stubbs to "wonder whether *Troilus* scholars, including Windeatt, need to revisit" an important editorial issue.⁴³ Yet the direction of influence might as easily be reversed: if my analysis here is accurate, a sympathetic reading of editors' discussions of Hoccleve's meter and of the textual affiliations of the *Regiment's* manuscripts is absolutely relevant to any paleographer who, having noticed its occasional y's with tails heading back up with a tick, might wonder if Royal 17 D.xviii is a holograph. Historical linguistics, whether it takes the form of dialectal or metrical study, is just as important to the questions at issue in scribal attribution as is paleography.

Hoccleve and Chaucer

To the degree that Mooney cites similarities of language, she recognizes the validity of my argument that paleography cannot stand alone as a discipline. The two recent arguments that Hoccleve was acquainted with Gower and Chaucer and thus that he was probable supervisor of the Trinity Gower and perhaps even Hengwrt and Ellesmere rely substantially, and in some cases entirely, on non-paleographical evidence. Mooney and Stubbs say that their identifications of B as Pynkhurst and D as Marchaunt "help to pinpoint" the production of Trinity R.3.2 "in London, near or within the Guildhall close."⁴⁴ If the arguments presented here are convincing, their assertion no longer holds, and represents another stumbling block to acceptance of *Scribes and the City's* argument that the Guildhall was an incubator of Middle English literature. Hoccleve, after all, had a hand in both the Trinity Gower and Hengwrt and was himself responsible for the outpouring of more copying of Middle English poetry in London, in the form of the manuscripts of the *Regiment* alone, than all the scribes discussed by Mooney and Stubbs together. Forty-three copies and a fragment are extant, many with strong signs of London-based production.⁴⁵

Mooney and Stubbs in effect acknowledge the need to bring him into the Guildhall fold in their approaches to the question, "How did Hoccleve become involved in the copying of Trinity College MS R.3.2 at all?"⁴⁶ Even when they fine-tune that question to return the focus to the City – "Was it through the connection with Chaucer that he was acquainted

with Pinkhurst and thus with the textwriter-clerks in and around the Guildhall?" – the effect is to underscore the fact that neither Hoccleve nor the putative go-betweens were Guildhall clerks. We are instead in the world of the Privy Seal, which provides, so say Mooney and Stubbs, archival evidence that connects Hoccleve to the Guildhall at one remove:

Linne Mooney has shown that Hoccleve was in fact acquainted with Chaucer by demonstrating that he wrote the 9 November 1399 Privy Seal document acknowledging Henry IV's renewal of Chaucer's annuity and commanding the exchequer to pay him the £10 he was owed in arrears [Kew, *The National Archives*, E 404/15/62]. Her discovery of Privy Seal documents written by Hoccleve's hand as early as 1383, probably during his apprenticeship under Guy de Rouclif, shows that he could have known John Gower too, since he may have already been working at the Office of the Privy Seal by 1382, when de Rouclif sold Gower two properties.⁴⁷

The 1382 document suggests a way in which Hoccleve and Gower might have encountered each other, but the possibility of any such encounter does not rely on this discovery. The presence of Hoccleve's hand in the Trinity *Confessio*, probably produced during Gower's lifetime, is a stronger indication of that possibility, though the fact remains that we do not know, whatever the archives tell us about the dates of Hoccleve's Privy Seal work.

As for the Privy Seal document concerning Chaucer's annuity, Mooney claims that it "may be taken as confirmation that Hoccleve knew Chaucer personally"; Nicholas Perkins, that it "strengthens evidence for the personal connection between" Chaucer and Hoccleve; and Horobin, as part of his argument that Hoccleve was Pynkhurst's supervisor, that it "has added further weight to the likelihood that Hoccleve knew Chaucer personally."⁴⁸ "Given Hoccleve's claims to have been a disciple of Chaucer," Mooney continues,

this document may be interpreted as the Exchequer Clerk taking care that his mentor continues to receive his annuity from the crown after the change of dynasty; so Chaucer's speedy acknowledgment from Henry IV comes not just in response to Chaucer's "Complaint to his Purse," but also comes swiftly, a month after the coronation, because his disciple Thomas Hoccleve was on hand to write out the issue warrant.⁴⁹

But such an approach *relies* on the idea that Chaucer and Hoccleve were friends, on the notion, that is, that Hoccleve's praise of "maistir deere and fadir reverent, / My maistir Chaucer, flour of eloquence" refers to a material friendship rather than expressing a trope akin to Lydgate's "Off oure language he was the lodesterre."⁵⁰ This 1399 document is among the "slips of

parchment commanding the Clerks of the Exchequer to pay out certain sums of money to various individuals in the E 404 series" that are "the simplest and most mundane of documents prepared by the Privy Seal," and is one of some 1070 documents, mainly warrants and bills for the Chancery, in Hoccleve's hand that she and Helen Killick have discovered in The National Archives, including another, from February 1400, concerning Chaucer.⁵¹ Unless we are to take the remaining 1068 instances, too, as signaling the clerk's special relationship with their subjects, this item provides no evidence for these poets' friendship.

Horobin cites, in addition to Mooney's discovery of the 1399 document, a recent study that has shown, contrary to received wisdom, "how Hoccleve's writing reveals a sustained and detailed engagement with the work of his predecessor."⁵² He is referring to Perkins's examination of what he presents as the *Regiment's* echoes of the *Troilus*, an essay whose argument itself in part relies on Mooney's discovery. Perkins delineates a number of parallels that would provide reasonable support for an already established case that Hoccleve engaged with Chaucer's poetry, but in my judgment cannot be said to constitute that case. His argument focuses on the ways in which the Old Man of the *Regiment* is similar to Pandarus, but as Perkins acknowledges all of these are generic. He cites structural parallels, such as that both men enjoin their interlocutors to "Awake!" and say they want to cure them, but the obvious model here is Lady Philosophy: "'But tyme is now,' quod sche, 'of medicyne ... Knowestow me nat? Why arttow stille? ... Here nys no peril,' quod sche; 'he is fallen into a litargye.'" ⁵³ Likewise the similarities of content, such as "The blynde man of colours al wrong deemeth" (*Regiment* 994) / "A blynde man kan nat juggen wel in hewis" (*Troilus* 11.21), are generic. Pandarus is fond of his aphorisms, and indeed Perkins cites Whiting's collection of proverbs alongside eleven of these parallels.⁵⁴

It seems to me to go too far, then, to say that Hoccleve's poetry shows sustained and detailed engagement with Chaucer's. If Hoccleve did know Chaucer's work well, and is thus the most likely of that poet's editors, why is all the supporting evidence so generic and easily explicable in other ways? An intimate knowledge of the *Troilus* might be expected to have issued in close verbal parallels of the sort that do appear in Usk's *Testament of Love*. The manuscripts of Chaucer's poetry and the *Regiment of Princes*, too, occupy separate silos. The Dugdale 45 scribe also copied a *Canterbury Tales* manuscript (Oxford, New College MS 314), and two fifteenth-century collections feature both the *Regiment* and Chaucer's poetry, but that is about it. "Given the extent of Hoccleve's suspected involvement in the early fifteenth-century

organization of Chaucer's poetry," writes John Thompson, "the apparent absence of Chaucer's verse from the parallel promotional programmes organized early for the *Regiment* and Hoccleve's autograph copies of his other short verse certainly seems worthy of note."⁵⁵ This absence is the more striking if we owe Hengwrt and Ellesmere primarily to his efforts.

The Hands of Hengwrt

Most of Horobin's 2015 argument that Hoccleve was Chaucer's first editor rests on findings made by others regarding the Trinity Gower, the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts, and Hoccleve's work in the Privy Seal, and leads to the quite reasonable conclusion that Hoccleve is the best candidate as supervisor of these manuscripts. His main addition to the evidence, though, is crucial to his case: his assertion that Hoccleve was not only Hand F of Hengwrt, filling in a few gaps, as Doyle and Parkes cautiously suggested, but also Hands C, D, and E, who respectively added the missing stanza about Adam to the *Monk's Tale* (fol. 89v), the second halves of the lines at *Friar's Tale* 1311–20 (fol. 74r; see [Chapter 2 Fig. 4](#)), and the phrase "at messe" at *Summoner's Tale* 1788 (fol. 80v). "If my suggestion that all of the additions attributed by Doyle and Parkes to Hands C–F should be attributed to Hoccleve is accepted," he points out, "it gives rise to a number of important questions. What was Hoccleve's role in the production of this manuscript? Was he directly supervising Pinkhurst, or was his involvement later, after Pinkhurst had left the project?"⁵⁶ Horobin deems the "much more obvious explanation" than the latter option to be that Hoccleve "was the supervisor responsible for overseeing, correcting, and completing the work of Pinkhurst. In short, Hoccleve was Chaucer's first editor."⁵⁷

This strong declaration is based on the conviction that Doyle and Parkes, in categorizing the various hands that contributed to Hengwrt, erred dramatically. If so, the oversight is understandable. For one, Hand F's (that is, Hoccleve's) material itself seems to have a different source: "Unlike hands C, D, and E, hand F was trying to deal with lacunae for which sufficient manuscript authority was not readily available."⁵⁸ In addition, the entries do not present themselves as obvious instances of Hoccleve's hands. (A reminder that Hg is available online in complete facsimile: see [Chapter 2, note 27](#).) The identification of Hand C as Hoccleve strikes me as possible but unlikely, despite the unqualified attribution of it to Hoccleve on the [medievalscribes.com](#) database entry for Hengwrt. The **A** of his "Adam" does look very similar to those Hoccleve used in Tr, and Horobin might be right

that this stanza features “the **y** with the tail tracing back to form the dot.”⁵⁹ Such possible support is countered, though, by the absence of Hocclevean flat top or distinctive sweeping tail from all six **g** forms on this addition to 89v (e.g., *godes*, *fynger* 2). Horobin says that we find the Hocclevean form with tail curling to the right “in the Hengwrt additions,” but the single instance he cites is Hand F’s – that is, Hoccleve’s – *good* on fol. 138v, which is irrelevant to his argument.⁶⁰ All in all, Doyle and Parkes’s observation that Hand C’s “style of script is very like that of BL MS. Arundel 38, the presentation copy to Prince Henry of Thomas Hoccleve’s *Regiment of Princes*, which must have been completed in 1412–13, and is the work of an equally practiced scribe” seems to me to respond better to the idiosyncrasies of Hand C’s addition of the Adam stanza to the Hengwrt *Monk’s Tale*.⁶¹

As for Hand D’s addition, visible in [Figure 4](#) as well as online, to my eye its aspect resembles those of neither Hoccleve nor Hand C. Neither does it feature any of the five distinctive letter forms, there being no hint that the tails of its **y** forms head back up (*pleyne* 3, *peyne* 4, *hys* 7), while the **g** form is the standard Anglicana form used by the Trinity B.15.17 scribe (for me, Adam Pynkhurst), the Hengwrt-Ellesmere scribe, and countless others in this era (*offryng* 5, *syng* 6, *caght* 7). If one already knew this was Hoccleve, then perhaps these differences could be accounted for by recourse to the notion that he was mimicking the main scribe’s hand.⁶² But that would be to beg the question, for such an explanation could apply to any scribe. That problem aside, such a hypothesis would not explain why Hoccleve (if it is he) did not try to do so for the Adam stanza in the *Monk’s Tale*, not to mention why he did not simply bring Scribe B back to fill in these gaps, given their putatively close relationship.⁶³ In sum, I do not find the evidence to support any conclusion “that all of the additions attributed by Doyle and Parkes to Hands C–F should be attributed to Hoccleve.”⁶⁴

What is at stake in the attribution of these few lines and words of Doyle and Parkes’s Hands C, D and E instead to Hand F? It was already clear enough that Hoccleve played a role in the manuscript’s production. Horobin does not say so explicitly, but the import of his claim, it seems to me, lies not in the presence of slightly more Hocclevean matter in Hengwrt, which would hardly matter, but rather in the *absence* of these three other hands. So long as Hoccleve is simply Hand F, one of four scribes brought in for quick fixes, his role appears tangential. But if he is C, D, and E as well, then Hoccleve’s is the only post-“Pynkhurst” hand to play a role in the production of Hengwrt (Hand B’s headers being coterminous with Hand A’s writing). This would substantially enhance the plausibility of the proposal that he was its supervisor. It does not so much constitute

that evidence on its own as eliminate what would otherwise make for serious counter-evidence. If either C or D is not Hoccleve, as Doyle and Parkes thought, the reasons for accepting that argument diminish, and Hoccleve joins these other unidentified hands in making additions under differing circumstances.

The Trinity Gower, Again

Horobin's case that Hoccleve also supervised the Trinity Gower (Tr) relies on three propositions: that Scribe E's stint is so short that it cannot easily be explained as the work of a normal scribe ("how much could he be expected to be paid for just two folios?"),⁶⁵ that someone must have supervised it, and that Scribe E, that is, Hoccleve, was well placed to do so. He also cites a "small but telling piece of evidence": Hoccleve's provision of the first four words following Scribe C's text on the verso of the singleton that is fol. 33 – in effect a catchword, though not where catchwords usually appear. Doyle and Parkes remark that "E's activity as supervisor must have been brief since he did not supply the omission on fol. 84 at the end of his own stint, nor is his hand visible elsewhere in the book."⁶⁶ Rather, their impression is "that the scribes worked as an *ad hoc* team, and each played a subordinate if complementary role in the preparation of this copy."⁶⁷ Horobin objects that this assumption "ignores the fact that somebody must have had overall responsibility for the production process," but Doyle and Parkes do not ignore this fact at all. They simply see no evidence as to that person's identity: "Each scribe seems to have dropped out of the operation after playing his limited part in the production of this copy, leaving the final coordination to somebody else. It is possible that the ultimate responsibility for the completion of the book was as unclear to them as it is to us."⁶⁸

Whoever that "somebody else" was, his work was poor: the scribes' ignorance of what would happen to the volume "would help to explain the failure to make good the various deficiencies," Doyle and Parkes remark: catchwords go missing; a scribe abandons his stint mid-line; "haste and inattention on the part of the decorators" remains uncorrected.⁶⁹ Scribe E (Hoccleve) copied the first two leaves and the first column of the recto of the third leaf of quire 11 (i.e., fols. 82r–84r), leaving the rest of that column and the next blank with corresponding absence of the forty-six lines that belong there. Scribe A wrote the verso of folio 84. However this is to be explained, say Doyle and Parkes, "there can be no doubt about the lack of coordination between the stints of A and E: the gap in the text represented

by the blank column on fol. 84 remained unfilled,” a lack that “indicates the absence of the kind of intimate association between the scribes which we would expect if they had worked together under constant supervision in one place where adjacent portions of the exemplar were kept together.”⁷⁰ It would be very difficult to square the case that Hoccleve was supervisor, or was working with Scribe D (Mooney and Stubbs’s Marchaunt), Scribe B (Mooney’s Pynkhurst), and Scribes A and C in the Guildhall on this volume (Mooney and Stubbs’s argument, not Horobin’s; see [note 44](#)), with his role in this exemplification of the manuscript’s lack of a competent supervisor. Nor does it follow from the brevity of his stint that he oversaw Trinity R.3.2’s production; on the contrary, the gap suggests that the supervisor did not provide him with those forty-six lines or perhaps that he became incapacitated.

Ellesmere

The most challenging consequence of Doyle and Parkes’s discoveries has been David Lawton’s suggestion that Hoccleve might have written some poetry long assigned to Chaucer. His poetic accomplishments show that he “would have been perfectly capable of improving, amending or forging links,” while his involvement in the production of Hg puts him in a position to do so.⁷¹ Lawton cites two indicators of Hoccleve’s possible additions. “His one great metrical weakness is the expansion of the pentameter to contain a vocative or a name,” as in *Regiment of Princes* line 4360, “I, Hoccleve, in swich cas am gilte; this me touchith,” which weakness “appears most conspicuously in the *Canterbury Tales* in the Franklin’s address to the Squire”: “So feelyngly thou spekest, sire, I allow the!” (*SqT* 676).⁷² But this Chaucerian line in fact scans iambic-pentametrically “with a tolerable, expedient, and comprehensible set of variations”: syn-copation of *spekest* > *spek’st*; elision of *sire I*, the fourth iambic foot of the line; and extrametrical unstressed *the*, rhyming with *thy yowthe* in 675.⁷³ Second, Lawton cites “the relentless emphasis on ‘wille’” in lines 1–8 of the *Squire’s Tale*: “It is Hoccleve, not Chaucer, who harps on will,” he writes, one objection to which would be lines 1–8 of the *Squire’s Tale* themselves, which can be removed from Chaucer only by begging the question.⁷⁴ The possibility, which Lawton is careful to present as such rather than as an argument, is reasonable, and his concern “that Chaucer criticism is not fully reflecting the implications of modern textual scholarship” is very well grounded,⁷⁵ but I do not consider Chaucer’s authorship of these passages to be in question.

Might Hoccleve, even so, still have supervised the production of the Ellesmere manuscript? In suggesting as much Pearsall, and Horobin after him, cite the "striking resemblances between the layout of the Latin in Arundel 38 [of the *Regiment*] and that in Ellesmere" and "the evidence that the portrait of Chaucer in Ellesmere is modeled on the same exemplar as the portrait of Chaucer that Hoccleve caused to be set in the margin of Harley 4866."⁷⁶ Other options would be that these features signal either Ellesmere's influence on later productions or Hoccleve's indebtedness to the same models used by the Ellesmere supervisor. Again elaborating on a point made by Pearsall, Horobin also cites Hoccleve's "connections with the London book trade, and, more specifically, with Adam Pinkhurst, the very scribe responsible for copying the *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts that I am arguing were produced under Hoccleve's supervision."⁷⁷ To be sure, any candidate for the identity as the Ellesmere editor certainly needs such connections as a prerequisite. But if participation in the Trinity Gower constitutes evidence of such, then Scribes A, B, C, and D are equally viable candidates. And in any case it is arbitrary to isolate Tr as the production whose scribes could have supervised Ellesmere. No evidence as to the identity of El's supervisor exists.

As we have seen, Doyle and Parkes argued that in fact no evidence of connections among the five scribes of Trinity R.3.2 presents itself. That is not to say that they could not have known each other in their day-to-day lives, just that their work on that volume seems to have been undertaken on separate, individual bases. But even if we do take that copy of the *Confessio* as the main evidence for Hoccleve's "connections with the London book trade" we should acknowledge that the connections are with one community within that trade: its scribes. These connections are not necessarily with the stationers along Paternoster Row who were in the business of securing and preparing the vellum, hiring the limners, arranging the binding, and the like. Arundel 38 and Harley 4866, if made under his auspices, testify to Hoccleve's connections with the supervisors who could perform such activities, but no compelling reason to suspect that he was that person presents itself. He had a day job in the Privy Seal, and a night hobby as a confessional poet who wrote about that day job, one in which he never mentioned any labor on behalf of the production of Chaucer's poetry.

"Another possible link between Hoccleve and Pinkhurst," concludes Horobin, "is a personal knowledge of Chaucer – if we accept that the poem to Adam Sciveyn is addressed specifically to Pinkhurst – and it seems quite natural that it should be these two men who took on the task of producing

authoritative copies of his works following the poet's death in 1400."⁷⁸ This is the core of Horobin's case: that someone clearly oversaw the collection of Chaucer's papers that enabled Hg and El to be produced, that Hoccleve and Thomas Chaucer have to date been the only candidates mooted,⁷⁹ and that between them the former just makes better sense. (Compare Margaret Connolly's suggestion that this literary executor might actually have been Pynkhurst, that is, Chaucer's scribe [Chapter 1, note 33].) But acceptance of the argument raises its own set of questions, some of which appear above, some of which might be better addressed if the case were more firmly presented: what, for instance, does it say about the datings of Hg and El and about the status of their exemplar(s)? By the same token, acceptance of the suggestion that Hoccleve supervised Hg would seem to identify him as among the likeliest candidates, together with John Shirley himself, as author of "Adam Scryveyne," at least if Chapter 1's argument that that lyric does not fit well within the Chaucerian corpus is accepted. If he was perfectly capable of improving or amending Chaucer's links, he could certainly write a stanza in rime royal. But if this is accepted, the only pieces of evidence for a connection with Chaucer are Hoccleve's fulsome praise of his master and the fact that two of the 1000-plus Privy Seal documents in his hand concern Chaucer's finances. Conversely, any objection to that conclusion on the grounds that we cannot know the other possibilities would apply equally to the case that Hoccleve was Chaucer's first editor.

His status as one of the two viable candidates as author of "Adam Scryveyne" does not render Hoccleve's candidacy very likely, of course, any more than it suggests that he was supervisor of Tr or the most famous *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts. The desire to promote such arguments relies primarily on the wiggle room afforded by our ignorance of the circumstances of literary production in London ca. 1400–10. Whose were the hands of Hengwrt? Who were A to D of Tr? Who copied Arundel 38, Harley 4866, and Royal 17 D.xviii, not to mention the handful of Langlands, CUL Dd.4.24 of the *Canterbury Tales*, the early *Troilus* manuscripts, those Gower texts not produced by D (whoever he was), and all the other poetry that came out of London in this era, most of which, we should remember, no longer survives? Who were their commissioners, limners, binders, correctors, readers? They were people acquainted, or not, with Chaucer, Gower, Marchaunt, Osborn, Carpenter, and Pynkhurst. It is a highly productive exercise, both for its own sake and for the results it produces, to elevate these men to roles that matter so much to our sense of English literary and even political history, even if they bring us back to where we started.

Conclusion

Where is Adam Pynkhurst?

It is my contention that Adam Pynkhurst, who overnight became by far the most (only?) famous scribe of the Middle English era, focus of so much of our teaching and scholarly energies over the past dozen years, copied a single known literary manuscript, not by Chaucer: Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.17. Given the mentions of “Adam Pynkhurst, scriptor et civis Londonie” in two deeds of transfer in 1385, it is certain that his hand at some point, at least, appeared elsewhere than in the few items from the following decade attributed to him in [Chapter 2](#).¹ It is nice to imagine that this included Chaucer or other Middle English literature but it seems more likely that Pynkhurst was fully occupied in the copying of legal documents since discarded, lost, or just not yet identified. Acting on a suggestion by Andrew Prescott, who first directed Estelle Stubbs to the Northampton appeal, I went searching for Pynkhurst’s hand in the records of the Court Rolls for Northampton’s manor, at the Haringey Archive Service in London, with no luck. When I found the Hm 114 scribe’s hand in so many Guildhall records, to which Sheila Lindenbaum directed me, I was in fact looking for the Hg-El scribe or Adam Pynkhurst. Another remarkable source for students of late-medieval scribal production is the digitization of the rolls held in The National Archives undertaken by Robert Palmer of the University of Houston and it is not impossible that some of the literary scribes of ca. 1400 are responsible for some of these rolls, produced for the most part in Westminster, as well.² But as Prescott remarks, the King’s Bench and Common Pleas rolls are “over 10,000 formal rolls produced between 1273 and 1500 containing more than four million individual membranes. In short, the courts of king’s bench and common pleas alone produced more than twenty times as much parchment as the dozens of scriptoria from England and Europe represented in the Cotton library.”³ One can while away many hours, days, weeks, clicking on the arrows to the next image, next, next, next, in the hope that Pynkhurst, the Hm 114 scribe, any recognizable hand, might appear. My hopes were not

fulfilled but perhaps others with more patience and a high threshold for continual disappointment will have different results.

A still more telling absence is that of Pynkhurst from the post-2006 textual scholarship on the *Canterbury Tales*. In part this is because of the presumed dominance of paleographical and codicological findings over editorial ones, seen in action in [Chapter 6](#) and elsewhere. Thus Stubbs has said that we should stop “allowing the textual evidence to dominate the debate” regarding Chaucer’s possible involvement with extant manuscripts, at the conclusion of her intriguing argument that Scribe D’s Corpus 198 copy of the *Canterbury Tales* bears signs of being much earlier than has been assumed.⁴ Mooney’s version of this was the assertion that Pynkhurst’s “long affiliation with Chaucer and his work lends greater authority to the Hengwrt and Ellesmere readings of Chaucer’s unfinished *Canterbury Tales*,” and she and Stubbs have also advocated the case that Hengwrt was begun under the poet’s auspices, which scenario, says Mooney, “would obviously render Hengwrt the superior authority for readings in those tales.”⁵ Only Daniel Mosser has pursued the idea that Mooney’s discovery should prompt “a new openness to the questions of whether or not it might have been produced during the poet’s lifetime and under his supervision,” but his conclusion is mixed: “We are left, then, with conflicting evidence as to authorial presence and absence in the Hengwrt project.”⁶ Since then Simon Horobin has nevertheless argued “that, while Pinkhurst may well have had access to Chaucer’s draft, he did not have a complete version when he began copying, and his access was sporadic and incomplete ... [H]e clearly did not have any indication of how many tales and links there should be, which order they should appear in, and which tales were incomplete.”⁷ This returns Scribe B to a status as just Scribe B: the name “Pynkhurst,” after all, relies heavily on the belief that he was the addressee of “Adam Scryveyne,” the dubious nature of which, Horobin acknowledges, Gillespie has demonstrated.

Neither Horobin nor Gillespie pursues the implications of the latter’s observation that there is no reason to think that Scribe B was Chaucer’s scribe at all. But Horobin observes that a dating of Chaucer’s first employment of Pynkhurst to the 1380s would lessen the identification’s reliance on “Adam Scryveyne.” To that end he brings to light a 1385 petition, now Kew, National Archives, C 81/1394/87, requesting a permanent deputy for Chaucer as controller of the wool custom, which, he claims unequivocally, “is in the hand of Adam Pinkhurst.”⁸ If the attribution is correct, then indeed it is “of considerable significance for our understanding of the nature of the relationship between poet and scribe, and for our assessment

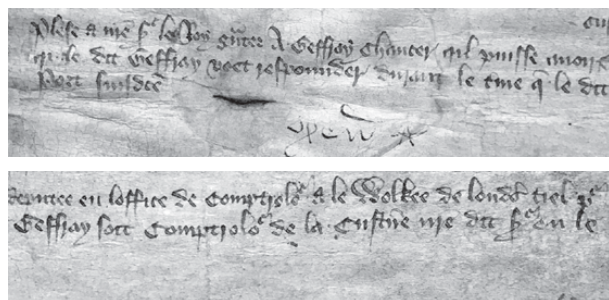


Figure 21 Petition on Chaucer's behalf, 1385, identified by Simon Horobin as hand of Scribe B (= Pynkhurst). Kew, The National Archives C/81/1394 (excerpts).

of the surviving manuscripts copied by Pinkhurst,” as Horobin remarks.⁹ He has now confirmed that he thinks that the scribe of this petition also copied another one, the charter of 1393 on behalf of John Northampton, discussed in [Chapter 2](#). To my eye, however, the appearance of the 1385 item differs from the 1393 one as strongly as does the latter from the Letter Book I entries that, as we saw in [Chapter 5](#), Horobin joins me in dissociating from Pynkhurst. The Northampton appeal looks quite like the hand of Organ's receipts, the *Piers Plowman* of Trinity B.15.17, and Pynkhurst's confirmation, but nothing like the spidery French of the 1385 document.

But, while this is certainly not Pynkhurst, might the hands who wrote the phrase “Geffray Chaucer” in the 1385 petition and “Geffrey Chaucer” in Ellesmere's final lines (fol. 232v) be identical ([Figure 21](#))?

The petition is very short and thus does not lend itself easily to attempts to identify its scribe. Horobin draws attention to some similarities, most of a generic sort (“the anglicana 8-shaped **g**, an upper-case **A** with an enlarged, closed upper lobe, a form of upper-case **W** with wide curved approach strokes”).¹⁰ At least one supposed similarity, the “secretary v-shaped **r** with an extended, wavy finishing stroke,” strikes me as doubtful: the former's instances look quite different, their extended finishing strokes not very wavy. The most obvious difference here and throughout is the earlier document's fondness for the Secretary **a** form; Horobin notes that Scribe B uses this more frequently in his stint in Trinity R.3.2 than in the Chaucer manuscripts, but the petition was written twenty-five years before that manuscript. That aside, it is striking that three of these Secretary **a** forms appear in the name “Geffray,” spelled “Geffrey” in El (fol. 232v). The **h** forms, too, are of totally different kinds. In sum, yes, these look pretty similar to each other. But so do hundreds of hands found in the

petitions and rolls being copied in London and Westminster in this era. If one were to look at those two versions of “Geffr[a/e]y Chaucer” with no preconceptions, would the result be confidence that they are in the identical hand? Horobin deems the similarities of duct and aspect between the two “more striking” than those of letter forms, and some might agree with him and answer my question in the affirmative. To me, the duct and aspect of each look quite different from the other’s, leaving as the only support for this attribution a set of assumptions that render that conclusion inevitable despite the lack of paleographical support: that B was Pynkhurst, that Pynkhurst was Chaucer’s scribe, and that Chaucer’s scribe was the most likely copyist of such a petition on his behalf – which were the assumptions that the identification was attempting to bypass.

This does not undermine, but rather supports, Horobin’s conclusion that the Hengwrt scribe had no special knowledge of the poet’s plans. His essay’s purpose, after all, is to argue both sides of a very difficult scenario: on the one side, that Pynkhurst was indeed Chaucer’s own scribe, with “access to authoritative exemplars,” who presumably worked with him from ca. 1385 to 1400, precisely when the poet was writing *The Canterbury Tales*, but on the other that “he had little prior knowledge of what exactly was likely to be forthcoming” and “no privileged insight into how these should be organized and arranged.”¹¹ The case about the haphazard production of Hengwrt might have been easier to mount if Horobin did “see any reason to doubt what the text [of ‘Adam Scryveyne’] seems to be telling us: that Adam Pynkhurst produced fair copies of *Troilus* and *Boece* for Chaucer while he was composing these texts in the 1380s.”¹² Aside from the fact that the poem does not mention Adam Pynkhurst, Horobin’s own conclusions about the production of Hengwrt, it seems to me, themselves provide the reasons to doubt what he takes the text to be telling us.

The years since the appearance of “Chaucer’s Scribe,” then, have not witnessed many other revisitations of Hengwrt’s individual readings as Mooney predicted. Hengwrt already had a very high textual reputation, beginning with Manly and Rickert’s edition, boosted by Norman Blake’s advocacy of its primacy, and cemented in its status as the basis for the *Chaucer Variorum* editions whose first publication was the Hengwrt facsimile.¹³ Knowledge that its scribe worked under Chaucer’s supervision would only varnish, rather than substantively improve, Hengwrt’s already high reputation. What has arisen, however, is renewed attention not to the text of the *Canterbury Tales*, that is to say, the pilgrims’ tales, but to the words surrounding them. “Now that the scribe is no longer anonymous and indeed appears to be the subject (and object) of a Chaucerian poem,

he seems to have taken on an 'author-function' of his own," writes Kenneth Clarke. In the marginal glosses to the *Clerk's Tale* he finds "a liminal space in which a *translatio* between Latin and vernacular is explored and allows a backward-and-forward movement between them that supplements the reading act."¹⁴

With similar material under scrutiny Stephen Partridge ends up with a quite different proposal: that Chaucer's "relationship with Pynkhurst – as well as his identification with the French literary culture of writers such as Machaut, Froissart, and Christine – may well have made *ordinatio* an integral aspect of composition for Chaucer, rather than an afterthought."¹⁵ For Partridge, Chaucer exploited this relationship so as to offer "his authorial version of the scribal colophon in the *Retraction*" in part by including "apology and request for forgiveness, declaration of good intentions, request for the reader's prayer, the writer's prayer, and self-identification," and also "by providing his own rubrics. If the practice of his French contemporaries is any guide, Chaucer may well have asserted his own authorship most actively through precisely those extratextual elements of his book that were traditionally the province of scribes."¹⁶ Literary criticism, like paleographical analysis, interprets seemingly identical evidence with diametrically opposed results, each quite viable on its own terms. And I do not think that my arguments concerning Pynkhurst, if correct, do any real harm to either of these approaches. The relationship implied by that name might have sparked the idea, but what came next transcends such accidents.

Even if what might have seemed the most obvious result of the "discovery" of Chaucer's scribe, a renewed analysis of the text, did not eventuate, it has nevertheless been a heady decade for scholars of Middle English literature, one of the rare times when the general public and literary critics outside the field have taken an interest in the research of paleographers and textual scholars. I think it is time, however, to leave behind the ideas that Adam Pynkhurst or "Adam Scryveyne" provides any access to the author, that we can confidently attribute legal documents of the 1380s that do not look much like B's hand to him anyway, that senior clerks of the Guildhall spent their time copying manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and the *Confessio Amantis*, and that that institution exerted a centripetal force on figures like Thomas Hoccleve. I do not have a single unifying vision with which to replace this magnificent one, my argument instead being that from the 1380s to the 1430s a wide variety of scribes and clerks in and around London got hold of a disparate body of exemplars of those and other works and, in differing circumstances, produced the literature we today research, study, teach, and

love. Despite my failure to provide a unified, Pynkhurst- or Guildhall- or Hoccleve-focused account, *Chaucer's Scribes*, I believe, is necessary so as to reset the terms within which we understand the circumstances of literary production in the decades surrounding 1400. The story told for the past decade or so relies on a large number of erroneous identifications that have been accepted as fact, which, if not corrected, will generate more errors and so on. It relies as well on methodologies that have been assumed to be more reliable than has proven the case, ones that have been embraced before being fully tested. This is our field at stake, its language, its poetry, its manuscripts, its men and women working in the Guildhall, petitioning the Parliament, copying the *Troilus*.

If a positive account of the circumstances of literary production in London ca. 1384–1432 is to emerge, then, it cannot be grounded on the narratives produced over the past dozen or so years. A great strength of *Scribes and the City* was that it grew from a research project with a very well-defined remit (the manuscripts of Chaucer, Gower, Trevisa, Langland, and Hoccleve), though by now the drawbacks of that approach are apparent. To be done properly such an enterprise would need to encompass all the manuscripts of those authors that seem to be London productions, many not mentioned in this book, and those of other authors and works, most obviously the *Brut*, Wycliffite Bible, and *Prick of Conscience*. In theory these scribes could have been working on anything, in Latin, French, or English: missal, medical treatise, charter, parliamentary petition, livery company's record book. The amount of material to be sorted through, catalogued, and correlated is enormous. We are fortunate to work in an age of ever-increasing digitization: my ability to access facsimiles of Hg, El, W, the Trinity Gower, Harley 4866 and 7334, the petitions of 1387/88, and other items on my iMac made this project possible (as did, to be sure, my physical proximity to many London institutions), and repositories continue to add digital materials by the day. Mooney, Horobin, and Stubbs's "Late Medieval English Scribes" database collects many relevant samples of hands as well, though its future effectiveness, leaving aside the problem of its sometimes questionable attributions, will rely on renewal of permissions to reproduce its sample pages and the robustness of the servers, software, and the like. But no matter the wonderful benefits of such projects, much else lies in collections without the resources to digitize very much.¹⁷

A full-scale history of scribal activities in London in the age of Chaucer and Hoccleve, then, would be a daunting if very worthwhile enterprise. But it would be a partial and in many ways arbitrary one as well. London was by no means the only site of Middle English composition or copying,

and we know there was great movement of texts and people around Britain, Ireland, and into Europe and sometimes beyond. Neither will it be lost on anyone that the great majority of new attributions in *Scribes and the City* and this book concern Latin documents, with a good handful of French ones as well. These clerks often respected the linguistic difference in their scripts, as in the Hm 114 scribe's use of more secretary forms in writing French than English texts (see [Chapter 4](#)). The "Middle English" poets they copied, too, of course, trafficked in many languages and often traveled the globe. Chaucer the great translator in France and Italy; Gower, composer in Latin, French, and English; *Mandeville's Travels*, the most global of any of these works. Might the scribes have played a role in the book trade, or in the copying of charters and rolls, on the continent as well as in London? I like to think, even in the absence of any evidence, that the Hm 114 scribe's missing years, mid-1411 to mid-1415, were spent in France as part of Henry V's retinue and that perhaps his taste for vernacular literature was inspired by an encounter there with the *Roman de la Rose*. That might be fanciful, but the point remains that if we take our topic to be the London-based scribes of Middle English literature we might never notice the evidence that points in other directions entirely.

A similar risk of critical blindness inheres in our assumptions about the practitioners of certain methodologies in our field. A main reason for the near-universal acceptance of the identification of Pynkhurst as Chaucer's scribe was surely a sense among those of us thoroughly trained in the literary analysis of poetry, but with only a passing acquaintance with paleography, that it was a "scientific" discipline whose findings – which is what they were considered to be, rather than interpretations – did not fall within our purview. This turns out to be far from the truth. For one thing, paleographical evidence is just not that difficult to assess on its own terms, and the problems with the employment of that discipline's methods identified in this book, such as too strong a willingness to explain away differences in aspect by recourse to change over time, and the conflation of a scribe's characteristic features with his distinctive and diagnostic letter forms, are matters of logic not script.

But a bigger problem for those willing to cede scribal attribution entirely to the paleographers is the relatively small role paleography actually played in many of these identifications. Josephine Koster has recently lamented that, "Since the [Pynkhurst as B] identification rests on knowing the minutiae of scribal practices and orthographic styles used in London in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and access to a number of manuscripts that aren't available digitally, it's hard for outsiders – even experts in medieval

literature – to challenge Mooney’s identification,”¹⁸ but I would tweak this slightly to say that it is rather the *assumption* that the identification rests on knowing the minutiae of orthographic styles that that has prevented such challenges. One of this book’s major themes has been the relationship between historical linguistics, especially the subfields of metrics and dialectology, with paleography and critical editing. In addition, on many occasions I assent entirely to the identifications put forth by Mooney, Stubbs, and Horobin while still taking strong issue with their interpretation of the evidence. A particular interpretation of “Adam Scryveyne,” the presentation of orthographical variants of the <gh> and yogh sounds, the misquoting of a scholar’s description of which clerks had access to the Guildhall’s records, the failure to read both *Canterbury Tales* passages marked “Marcant” in Harley 7334, the seeking out in the Letter Books and elsewhere only of texts that would support the identifications being promoted, the notion that scribes might treat alliterative verse differently from rhyming verse, the judgment that the opening pages of a volume are “important” and thus reserved for a senior clerk, the belief that a manuscript’s readers would commemorate its scribe via marginal comment: all of these and others are no less a part, and in many cases the very foundation, of the claims this book has confronted. None of them is paleographical in character.

Back in 2004, Linne Mooney’s stunning announcement certainly made a lot of people who might never have heard of Doyle and Parkes, not to mention Neil Ker or H. G. Schulz, begin paying attention to the exciting world of manuscript studies. The cost of that attention, however, might have been a willingness to keep the world of paleography in the realm of the experts: otherwise, I suspect, her claims would not have been embraced with such alacrity. Adam Pynkhurst can be considered “Chaucer’s scribe” only in the loosest of senses covered by that phrase, but he, together with Scribes B and D of the Trinity Gower, the Hm 114 scribe, and Hoccleve, has now been subjected to much more extensive analysis and attempts at historicization than anyone could have imagined prior to 2004. Even if not all of that analysis has turned out to stand up to scrutiny, the very fact of that scrutiny makes for a much healthier state of affairs than was the case when benign neglect was the best that those in the paleographical and historical-linguistic regions of our discipline could have hoped for from those who, like me, wrote dissertations that could hardly be further afield. No matter how loudly I argue that Adam Pynkhurst was not Chaucer’s scribe, his place in Middle English studies will always extend far beyond what his career actually supports. We all need Adam Pynkhurst, whoever he might have been or will become.

Notes

Introduction

- ¹ Respectively, Linne R. Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," *Speculum* 81 (2006): 97–138; Michael Calabrese, review of Linne R. Mooney and Estelle Stubbs, *Scribes and the City: London Guildhall Clerks and the Dissemination of Middle English Literature 1375–1425* (York Medieval Press, 2013), *The Medieval Review* 14.08.06 (August 2014), via <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr>.
- ² Simon Horobin and Linne R. Mooney, "A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript by the Hengwrt/Ellesmere Scribe and Its Implications for London Standard English," *SAC* 26 (2004): 65–112.
- ³ To my knowledge, J. S. P. Tatlock was the first to say that Hengwrt "is in the same hand throughout, as the Ellesmere is, and these hands are almost certainly the same": "The *Canterbury Tales* in 1400," *PMLA* 50 (1935): 100–39 (133); endorsed by A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, "The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century," in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), 163–210 (170–74). Henry Ansgar Kelly, though, has called for scholars to revisit the possibility that Hg and El are by separate hands: "Vance Ramsey on Manly-Rickert," *SAC* 32 (2010): 327–35, referring for instance to Roy Vance Ramsey, "The Hengwrt and Ellesmere Manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*: Different Scribes," *SB* 35 (1982): 133–54, which, says Kelly, has not been adequately "opposed or modified by counterevidence" (335). I disagree, being convinced by the rejoinder by M. L. Samuels, "The Scribe of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere Manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*," ed. J. J. Smith (1983), in M. L. Samuels and J. J. Smith, *The English of Chaucer and His Contemporaries* (Aberdeen University Press, 1988), 38–50. Hg and El comfortably fulfil my criteria presented below for attribution to the identical hand.
- ⁴ On the production of Trinity R.3.2, see Doyle and Parkes, "Production of Copies." I use "Scribe B," "B," "Hengwrt-Ellesmere scribe," and "Hg-El scribe" interchangeably.
- ⁵ See Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," 116–18 on these transactions, and Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 84–85 for more information on the lease.

- 6 *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381, Part 2: Lincolnshire-Westmorland*, ed. Carolyn C. Fenwick (Oxford University Press, 2001), 558 col. 1. Linne R. Mooney, “Pynkhurst, Adam (fl. 1385–1410),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford University Press, 2012), via www.oxforddnb.com, cites Joanna as flourishing ca. 1355–69, whose end date we can now push forward by at least a dozen years. I have come upon one other Pynkhurst life record from 1393, which fills out the picture a bit: “William Changelton sued Adam Pynkhurst for the manor of Felde [in Surrey], which John Kyngesnode had given to John Marchall and Joan, his wife, and the heirs of their bodies”: Plea Rolls, Michaelmas 17 Rich. II, membr. 103r: see *Pedigrees from the Plea Rolls, Collected from the Pleadings in the Various Courts of Law, A.D. 1200 to 1500*, ed. George Wrottesley (Great Britain: Public Record Office, 1905), 194, available via <https://archive.org>.
- 7 Gary Baker, “Investigating the Socio-Economic Origins of English Archers in the Second Half of the Fourteenth Century,” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 12 (2014): 173–216 (195), which eventually led me to the Poll Tax record. Baker does not mention anything about the scrivener.
- 8 Richard Firth Green, “The Early History of the Scriveners’ Common Paper and its So-Called ‘Oaths,’” in *Middle English Texts in Transition: A Festschrift Dedicated to Toshiyuki Takamiya on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Simon Horobin and Linne R. Mooney (York Medieval Press, 2014), 1–20 (15).
- 9 Baker, “English Archers,” 195. Likewise Mooney and Stubbs: “such shifts of career or position were not unheard of: consider the case of Geoffrey Chaucer, who served as soldier, then king’s esquire and member of Edward III’s household until around the age of thirty-four, then controller of customs for twelve years to age forty-six, and holder of other offices in the gift of the king until his death in 1400” (*Scribes and the City*, 84).
- 10 Linne R. Mooney, “A Holograph Copy of Thomas Hoccleve’s *Regiment of Princes*,” *SAC* 33 (2011): 263–96.
- 11 Simon Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve: Chaucer’s First Editor?” *ChauR* 50 (2015): 228–50.
- 12 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 84; see also Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 114–18, where she grants that the separation of these two Adams is “entirely speculative” (118).
- 13 Prior to ca. 1400, about half of the nobility had died by the age of fifty: Neil Cummins, “Longevity and the Rise of the West: Lifespans of the European Elite, 800–1800,” *London School of Economics and Political Science Department of Economic History Working Papers* 209 (September 2014): 1–51 (esp. 18–20), <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/60555>.
- 14 Jane Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name and a Clutch of London Manuscripts from c. 1400,” *MÆ* 80 (2011): 247–70 (263). The petition is online via <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk>. Thanks to Andrew Prescott for advice on this issue. See Mooney and Stubbs *Scribes and the City*, 82–85 on the other Pynkhurst life records. They do not mention this petition, though they elsewhere cite Roberts’s essay.

- 15 See Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 116; Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 83.
- 16 Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 263.
- 17 Andrew Cawthorne, Reuters item of July 20, 2004, at for instance www.tribuneindia.com (search “Chaucer scribe”). This seems to be the source for Lawrence van Gelder, “Books: Arts Briefing: Identity Revealed,” *The New York Times*, July 21, 2004, via www.nytimes.com.
- 18 Mary Robertson, “The Name of the Scribe: Solving a Mystery behind the Huntington’s *Canterbury Tales*,” *Huntington Frontiers* 2.1 (Spring–Summer 2006): 3–4 (4).
- 19 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 137.
- 20 “A Look Back at the Glasgow Congress,” *The Chaucer Newsletter* 26.2 (2004): 2, via <http://newchaucersociety.org/>, noting that no other NCS congress had earned a page in the *Guardian*: John Ezard, “The Scrivener’s Tale: How Chaucer’s Sloppy Copyist Was Unmasked after 600 Years,” *The Guardian*, July 20, 2004, via www.theguardian.com/uk.
- 21 Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 247.
- 22 The ephemeral nature of the evidence renders this assertion difficult to substantiate, but I have encountered student presentations and projects on Pynkhurst on the web and in person, both in U.S. and British institutions; many colleagues have told me of “Adam Scryveyne”’s new role in their teaching; and he and that poem have been prominent in my Chaucer classes in both Sydney and London.
- 23 Instances of these, respectively: Lawrence Warner, *The Lost History of “Piers Plowman”: The Earliest Transmission of Langland’s Work* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), xv; Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve”; Alexandra Gillespie, “Reading Chaucer’s Words to Adam,” *ChauR* 42 (2008): 269–83; and Josephine Koster, “Masters and Commanders: Considering the Concept of the Edited Text,” *Textual Cultures* 9.2 (2015): 19–26, who, citing Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name” and my essay “Scribes, Misattributed: Hoccleve and Pinkhurst,” *SAC* 37 (2015): 55–100, writes: “I suspect that the identification of Adam Pinkhurst is going to become the 21st century equivalent of the Chaucer Society’s reworking of the last lines of the Parson’s Prologue to fit Victorian notions of correct narrative flow, in total defiance of all the manuscripts,” though she is also “sure ... that scholarly works will go on naming [Pynkhurst] as Hand B for years to come” despite the reasons for doubt (24, 24–25).
- 24 See <https://global.oup.com/oxforddnb/info/faqs>; see above, note 6 for Pynkhurst’s entry.
- 25 This is from the web page for the digital copies of Hengwrt, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales Peniarth MS 392D, and of the Methyr fragment of the *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, MS 21972D, at www.llgc.org.uk/?id=257.
- 26 Press release of October 12, 2011, University of Sheffield; also: “London Guildhall: Cradle of English Literature,” press release of August 9, 2010, University of York, and “Scribes and the City of London,” press release by

- City of London, May 16, 2012, updated January 29, 2013, an updated version of an article originally published in a 2009/10 newsletter. These are easy to find online via web searches.
- 27 Recent essays that rely and build on all of Mooney and Stubbs's claims are L. R. Poos and Martha D. Rust, "Of *Piers*, Polltaxes and Parliament: Articulating Status and Occupation in Late Medieval England," *Fragments* 5 (2016), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.9772151.0005.004>, which focuses on the copies of *Piers Plowman* by (their) Richard Osborn, John Marchaunt, and Adam Pynkhurst; and two essays in *The Dynamics of the Medieval Manuscript: Text Collections from a European Perspective*, ed. Karen Pratt, Bart Besamusca, Matthias Meyer, and Ad Putter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017): Margaret Connolly, "What John Shirley Said about Adam: Authorship and Attribution in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.20" (81–100), which reads "Adam Scryveyne" in light of the book, concluding that "we might be more alert to the possibilities of exchange and interaction afforded by the multiple environments in which [John Shirley] moved, and principally – in regard to what he might know about Chaucer – his potential knowledge of that network of London scribes whose existence is being brought to light through the work of Linne Mooney, Estelle Stubbs, and Simon Horobin" (98) – the inclusion of Horobin, though, rather jarring since he opposes the Mooney–Stubbs claim on which she relies (see [Chapter 5, note 49](#)); and Tamara Pérez-Fernández, "Shared Exemplars and the Creation of Miscellanies in the Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*" (241–56), which focuses on the copies of the *Troilus* by (their) Osborn and Carpenter. See also [Chapters 4](#) and [5](#) for other instances.
 - 28 Bruce Holsinger, *The Invention of Fire* (London: HarperCollins, 2015), 208, 380.
 - 29 Amy Rowland, *The Transcriptionist* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 2014), 104–106. This character first remarks, to the bewilderment of Lena, who expects her to discuss her sister's death: "It was so simple, really, hiding in plain sight" (103): one wonders whether Rowland, who was indeed a transcriptionist for the *New York Times*, took the copy for that paper's item on Mooney ([note 17](#)). I first learned about Rowland's novel from Matthew Fisher's review, "The Cost of Copying," *Public Books*, www.publicbooks.org/the-cost-of-copying, February 1, 2015.
 - 30 Christopher de Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 428.
 - 31 *Ibid.*, 432.
 - 32 K. P. Clarke, *Chaucer and Italian Textuality* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 135. An unfortunate effect of de Hamel's depiction of the situation is that it has misled some readers into believing, as did one early reviewer of his book, that "this hypothesis has provoked exactly the same sort of violent disputation that some of us know only too well when it comes to the attribution and connoisseurship of works of art": David Ekserdjian, review of de Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts*, in *Literary Review* 446 (September

2016), <https://literaryreview.co.uk/the-illuminati>. I have heard of a few conference presentations that, if reported accurately, might have lent themselves to such a characterization, however.

1 Adam

- 1 All quotations in this paragraph from Robertson, “The Name of the Scribe,” 3, 4.
- 2 Facsimile available via www.trin.cam.ac.uk/library/wren-digital-library, from which I transcribe. For a slightly different verbatim transcription and comments on the difficulties inherent in that enterprise, see A. S. G. Edwards, “Chaucer and ‘Adam Sciveyn,’” *MÆ* 81 (2012): 135–38 (135, 137 n.1).
- 3 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 105.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 101.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 97 (acknowledgments), 107 n.38.
- 6 Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 247, source of the following two quotations. I refer to *A Book of London English, 1384–1425*, ed. R. W. Chambers and Marjorie Daunt, with an Appendix on English Documents in the Record Office by M. M. Weale (Oxford: Clarendon, 1931), and Jane Roberts, *Guide to Scripts Used in English Writings up to 1500* (London: British Library, 2005; now reprinted, Liverpool University Press, 2015).
- 7 Bernard M. Wagner, “Chaucer’s Scrivener,” *TLS* (June 13, 1929): 474, cited Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawl. D.51, fol. 23r, which records admission to the Company “‘between 1392 and 1404.’ As this is the earliest list among the records, it is not known if Pinckhurst was a member of the Brotherhood at the time the *Troilus* was being written.”
- 8 These are Thomas Usk, scrivener for the Goldsmiths’ Company (Chapter 4), and Thomas Spencer, member of the Scriveners Company, who seems to have owned and perhaps copied a *Troilus* in 1394: Martha Carlin, “Thomas Spencer, Southwark Scrivener (d. 1428): Owner of a Copy of Chaucer’s *Troilus* in 1394?” *ChauR* 49 (2015): 387–401.
- 9 R. E. Kaske, “Clericus Adam and Chaucer’s *Adam Sciveyn*,” in *Chaucerian Problems and Perspectives: Essays Presented to Paul E. Beichner C.S.C.*, ed. Edward Vasta and Zacharias P. Thundy (University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 114–18 (114); Russell A. Peck had remarked about “the public dream” here invoked: “We recall that other Adam Sciveyn, who gave the names to all the creatures and wrote the first chapter of the book in which we are all characters, whose careless act of negligence and rape left us all, through that inborn propensity for error, to labor and scrape out our living correcting mistakes. Because of his old errors it becomes our job to renew the work ‘ofte a-daye’”: “Public Dreams and Private Myths: Perspective in Middle English Literature,” *PMLA* 90 (1975): 461–68 (467). For possible further support for such an approach, see Brendan O’Connell’s discussion of an English manuscript illustration: “*Adam Sciveyn* and the Falsifiers of Dante’s *Inferno*: A New Interpretation of Chaucer’s *Wordes*,” *ChauR* 40 (2005): 39–57 (44, 45 fig. 1).
- 10 See O’Connell, “*Adam Sciveyn* and the Falsifiers of Dante’s *Inferno*,” 46–48.

- 11 C. Paul Christianson, *A Directory of London Stationers and Book Artisans, 1300–1500* (New York, NY: Bibliographical Society of America, 1990), 128–29. In the entry for Pynkhurst (149) he suggests those two and the following, Adam Stedeman, as candidates for the lyric's addressee. Mooney observes that Christianson does not cite Wagner, "Chaucer's Scrivener," identifying "Adam Pinckhurst," and continues: "Christianson also names those put forward by Ramona Bressie and Manly (without citing them or their *TLS* articles), Adam Stedeman, scrivener, and Adam Leycestre, parchmenter, as possible addressees of the poem" ("Chaucer's Scribe," 100 n.11), but in fact Manly's candidate was Acton (note 14), and so far as I know Christianson, whom Mooney does not credit with any contribution, was the first to suggest Leycestre.
- 12 Ramona Bressie, "Chaucer's Scrivener," *TLS* (May 9, 1929): 383, which grew from her early work as part of the Chicago circle led by John M. Manly (see note 14) and her Ph.D. supervisor Edith Rickert. For an account of her sad life see Thomas H. Bestul, "Ramona Bressie, the Study of Manuscripts, and the Chaucer Life-Records," *Medieval Feminist Forum* 45.1 (2009): 68–92. O'Connell endorses this possibility: "Adam Scriveyn and the Falsifiers of Dante's *Inferno*," 51–52.
- 13 Aage Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925), 57.
- 14 John Matthews Manly, "Chaucer's Scrivener," *TLS* (May 16, 1929): 403.
- 15 Bressie, "Chaucer's Scrivener." On the historical Harry Bailif see now Martha Carlin, "The Host," in *Historians on Chaucer: The "General Prologue" to the "Canterbury Tales,"* ed. Stephen H. Rigby with the assistance of Alastair J. Minnis (Oxford University Press, 2014), 460–80, esp. 462–66, and Sebastian Sobiecki, "A Southwark Tale: Gower, the 1381 Poll Tax, and Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*," *Speculum* 92 (2017): 630–60 (652–56). Another possible exception other than "Adam Scryveyne" would be "To Rosemounde," but its addressee, too, might be fictional given that the name "was fairly common in verse" (Laila Z. Gross, "The Short Poems," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed. Larry D. Benson [Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1987], 1082), and in any case the grounds for the attribution to Chaucer are weak, as observed by Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition*, 439–40, whose skepticism to my knowledge remains unanswered.
- 16 Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," 102.
- 17 Edith Rickert, "Thou Vache," *Modern Philology* 11 (1913): 209–25 (223 n.1). The *MED*, s.v. "scrivein" (c), as surname, records instances from ca. 1208 to 1344. A "Reginald Skreveyn" of this time (1393) and place (London) is named in *Calendar of Select Pleas and Memoranda of the City of London Preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall A.D. 1381–1412*, ed. A. H. Thomas (1932; Cambridge University Press, 2014), 215, also available via www.british-history.ac.uk. Manly himself would later propose another candidate (note 14 above).
- 18 See *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital, founded 1123: A Calendar*, ed. Nellie J. M. Kerling (London: St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 1973), no. 925. Cf. Bressie: "Instances might be cited to prove that Adam could have been

- referred to as Adam Stedeman, Adam Stedeman, 'scriptor' or 'scriveyn,' or simply Adam Scriptor or Adam Scriveyn" ("Chaucer's Scrivener").
- 19 Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition*, 57 n.2; Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," 102 n.18, cites *A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer: The Minor Poems, Part 1*, ed. George Pace and Alfred David (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 136 n.1, "[f]or notes on 'Scriveyne' as an occupational designator or surname"; Pace and David in turn cite Brusendorff as here quoted.
 - 20 Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition*, 276. Gillespie has recently argued explicitly that the heading is Shirley's ("Reading Chaucer's Words," 275–76), but Mooney has not said otherwise: she and Stubbs object not by defending the title's authenticity but by arguing "that Chaucer himself names his scribe as 'Adame scryveyne' in the poem (line 1)" (*Scribes and the City*, 71). They seem to misunderstand Gillespie's point, which is precisely that the only authority for such a reference to "Chaucer himself" is that heading, which is not Chaucer's at all, as they seem to grant. Mooney and Stubbs continue by observing that in reading the Scriveners Company Common Paper we find "no other Adam as a member of the company, even looking ahead as far as Robert Wade, who on p. 66 dated his oath in the fifth year of Henry VI (1427–8)" (*ibid.*). Yet there is no warrant for taking "scryveyne" so narrowly: on August 28, 1389, one "John Whyte, *lymenour*, was committed to prison for a debt of 16s which Henry Gaysle, *scriveyn*, recovered against him on the award of the masters of the *Lymenours*," the creditor, Gaysle, likewise not a member of the company (Thomas, *Calendar*, 148, citing City of London, London Metropolitan Archives [hereafter LMA], CLA/024/01/02/030, Plea and Memoranda Roll 30 [former ref. A29], membr. 1r). Graham Pollard remarks, "There can be no doubt that the word scrivener occasionally describes a textwriter long after they had formed separate gilds in London" ("The Company of Stationers before 1557," *The Library*, 4th ser., 18.1 [1937]: 1–38 [8 n.4]).
 - 21 Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.20, p. 139, to which my attention was drawn by Margaret Connolly, *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 85, saying that the "level of information" provided in the headnote to "Adam Scryveyne" "is dwarfed" by that given here.
 - 22 Gillespie, "Reading Chaucer's Words," 275.
 - 23 Margaret Connolly observes that the heading seems to be in two inks, and was originally just "a Geffrey vn to Adame," which he provided "because the information contained there was, for him, entirely sufficient. Shirley himself knew the full identity of both Geffrey [Chaucer] and Adame [Pynkhurst], and he knew this because he had received the poem from a reliable source. The later additions, in a different ink, spell out these identities for a different, less knowledgeable audience" ("What John Shirley Said about Adam," 96). The point remains, though, that there is no evidence that this "Adam" was Pynkhurst.
 - 24 Pollard, "Company of Stationers," 8 n.4. The second comment relies on the qualification of a 1463 Canterbury record regarding one "Thomas Howlett,

- textwriter, alias scrivener” as cited in *OED*, s.v. “textwriter,” n. def. 1. Pollard was writing before the *MED* had reached “S,” but its entry s.v. “scribein” (n.), a., “a professional scribe,” has only three entries pre-1389, none from London.
- 25 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 102.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 101 n.16, source of following quotation as well.
- 27 *OED*, s.v. “Adam” (n.1), etymology. This objection is also voiced by Jordi Sánchez-Martí, “Adam Pynkhurst’s ‘Necglygence and Rape’ Reassessed,” *English Studies* 92 (2011): 360–74 (362 n.13), and Pamela Robinson, review of *Scribes and the City*, *JEBS* 17 (2014): 395–98 (397), citing Christianson.
- 28 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 102. Gillespie cites this as “the only point Mooney makes with which I disagree” (“Reading Chaucer’s Words,” 278).
- 29 Kaske, “*Clericus Adam*,” 116–17. For Carolyn Dinshaw, “The poem evokes and exploits the rich implications of what may be simply a particularly felicitous circumstance: the scribe’s name is Adam” (*Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* [Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989], 4), while Britt Mize sees no conflict between his reading of “Chaucer’s Adam as Adam the first father” and his suspicion “that Chaucer did have a particular scribe Adam in mind” (“Adam, and Chaucer’s Words unto Him,” *ChauR* 35 [2001]: 351–77 [364, 369–70 n.3]).
- 30 Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition*, 235.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 284.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 236. See Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, “‘Chaucer’s Chronicle,’ John Shirley, and the Canon of Chaucer’s Shorter Poems,” *SAC* 20 (1998): 201–18.
- 33 Connolly, “What John Shirley Said about Adam,” 97 (her emphasis).
- 34 Shirley inscribes it as well in Trinity R.3.20, p. 361, headed “Pandare to Troylus.” Boffey and Edwards say this epitomizes “his general haziness on what was and was not canonical” (“Chaucer’s Chronicle,” 212). For a description of the manuscript and an image of Shirley’s inscriptions on these flyleaves see http://ds.lib.berkeley.edu/EL26A13_43, source as well of the Walton item about to be quoted. I cite *Troilus and Criseyde* from the text of Cambridge, Corpus Christi MS 61, with the punctuation of Stephen A. Barney’s edition, in *The Riverside Chaucer*.
- 35 These are, respectively, BL MS Cotton Vitellius E.xi, fol. 4v, “chauser geffrey” once in the scribal hand and once by another hand, and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B.24, fol. 119r. See Julia Boffey, “Proverbial Chaucer and the Chaucer Canon,” in *Reading from the Margins: Textual Studies, Chaucer, and Medieval Literature*, ed. Seth Lerer (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1996), 37–47 (39), going on to note that another instance, Manchester, John Rylands Library MS Lat. 201, incorporates the stanza “with other lines of verse that include the apocryphal ‘Chaucer’s Prophecy’” (39–40).
- 36 A. S. G. Edwards, “Reading John Walton’s Boethius in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” in *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England*, ed. Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 35–49 (45); on numbers of manuscripts see 35–36, and 46–47 for a list of Walton’s. On the manuscript featuring Shirley’s copy of Chaucer’s *Boece*, see Ralph Hanna, “John Shirley and British Library, MS Additional 16165,” *SB* 49 (1996): 95–105.

- 37 De Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts*, 450–51.
- 38 Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375–1510* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 31. He is discussing the tendency of critics to take this as representative of all authors and all scribes rather than making the point I do here.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 92.
- 40 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 102.
- 41 Norman Blake, “Geoffrey Chaucer: Textual Transmission and Editing,” in *Crux and Controversy in Middle English Textual Criticism*, ed. A. J. Minnis and Charlotte Brewer (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992), 19–38 (20). In his earlier book Blake once takes Chaucer’s authorship of the poem for granted, but is later more circumspect (“If this poem is Chaucer’s, and it has been accepted as his by most scholars ...”): *The Textual Tradition of the “Canterbury Tales”* (London: Edward Arnold, 1985), 48, 182.
- 42 See Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 282, 285, relying on Peter J. Lucas, *From Author to Audience: John Capgrave and Medieval Publication* (University College Dublin Press, 1997), 23–24, 89.
- 43 Edwards, “Chaucer and ‘Adam Scryveyn,’” 136.
- 44 To be clear, I am not adjudicating either possibility: between the poem itself and the issue of rubbing and scraping, neither, one, or both could be figural. My point is that the defense of a literal-only interpretation of the lyric at large could hardly object to Edwards’s literalism.
- 45 Lisa H. Cooper argues that the distinction drawn between the physical labor forced upon the versifier of “Adam Scryveyne” (correcting, rubbing, scraping) and Adam’s copying suggests that this poem “figures the poet not as an artisan, but rather as the overseer of another’s manual labor,” and that “even when the poet calls himself a ‘makere’” at the end of the *Troilus*, “he is not thinking of his English versifying in strictly material terms”: *Artisans and Narrative Craft in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 12–13.
- 46 Edwards, “Chaucer and ‘Adam Scryveyn,’” 136, citing *MED*, s.v. “making(e)” (ger.), 5b (a).
- 47 David Burnley, “Chaucer’s Literary Terms,” *Anglia* 114 (1996): 202–35 (227). He seeks to correct the claim that Chaucer used *poete* for classical poets and *makere* for himself and vernacular authors by Glending Olson, “Making and Poetry in the Age of Chaucer,” *Comparative Literature* 31 (1979): 272–90. See *MED*, s.v. “maker(e)” (n.), 3(a), and *OED*, s.v. “maker” (n.), 3(a) for this definition. Given that “Adam Scryveyne” is one of few sites of potential Chaucerian usage, there is even slighter evidence than Olson admits (274). See also Cooper’s comments in [note 45](#). The term appears again in the incipit to the *Retraction* (“Heere taketh the makere of this booke his leve” [rubric between *Pars I* 1080–81; quotations from the *Canterbury Tales* are from Ralph Hanna’s edition in *The Riverside Chaucer*]), whose precise meaning likewise is difficult to pin down given that the phrase is also used for the technical activity of book-making, an ambiguity which, Stephen Partridge argues, Chaucer might well be exploiting: “‘The Makere of this Boke’: Chaucer’s *Retraction* and the

- Author as Scribe and Compiler,” in *Author, Reader, Book: Medieval Authorship in Theory and Practice*, ed. Stephen Partridge and Erik Kwakkel (University of Toronto Press, 2012), 106–53.
- 48 Edwards, “Chaucer and ‘Adam Scriveyn’,” 135–36. Claire M. Waters notes that the closest Chaucer comes to the term *renuwe* elsewhere is *renovelen*: “*Makyng and Middles in Chaucer’s Poetry*,” in *Readings in Medieval Textuality: Essays in Honour of A. C. Spearing*, ed. Cristina Maria Cervone and D. Vance Smith (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016), 31–44 (35–36 n.15).
- 49 On the difficulties inherent in such comparisons of vocabulary see, e.g., R. A. Cooper and D. A. Pearsall, “The *Gawain* Poems: A Statistical Approach to the Question of Common Authorship,” *RES* n.s. 39 (1988): 365–85.
- 50 This line is Cambridge, Peterhouse College MS 75.1, fol. 71v, facsimile available via <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk>. On its authorship and copying see Kari Anne Rand Schmidt, *The Authorship of “The Equatorie of the Planetis”* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), and Kari Anne Rand, “The Authorship of *The Equatorie of the Planetis* Revisited,” *Studia Neophilologica* 87 (2015): 15–35.
- 51 *MED*, s.v. “*treu(e)*” (adv.), 4a, “truly, factually,” citing Prol.314f., “Dares ... And Dytes ... were present ... And as it fel they write trewe and wel, / Eche in his tonge.”
- 52 Stephen A. Barney, *Studies in “Troilus”: Chaucer’s Text, Meter, and Diction* (East Lansing: Colleagues, 1993), 88.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 86.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 78–79. Likewise M. L. Samuels: “The view that Chaucer did not write in decasyllables has been repeated with such monotonous regularity during recent decades that there is some danger that it may eventually be believed.” He provides what I take to be a convincing riposte to that view. “Chaucerian Final ‘-E’” (1972), in Samuels and Smith, *The English of Chaucer and His Contemporaries*, 7–12 (7).
- 55 Barney, *Studies in “Troilus,”* 88.
- 56 Note that MSS ADRS1Cx omit “for” in line 871 (Cx omits the term in 869, where A omits “to”). Conversely, some MSS read “for to” for “to” in the previous four lines cited: H4 at 1.1; GgH4H5R at 1.866; Gg at v.282 (there are no relevant variants in v.1566). See the apparatus at those lines in *Troilus and Criseyde: A New Edition of “The Book of Troilus,”* ed. B. A. Windeatt (London: Longman, 1984).
- 57 Walter W. Skeat, ed., *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd edn, vol. 1, *Romaunt of the Rose, The Minor Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1899), 379 (text), 539 (“in l. 2, we find *for to*, where *for* is superfluous”), misreported by Pace and David, who have Skeat dropping *to* rather than *for* (*Minor Poems*, 136). They also attribute to Skeat the point that *scryveyne* is from OFr *escrivain*, when in fact he is here quoting Koch, ed., *A Critical Edition of Some of Chaucer’s “Minor Poems”* (Berlin, 1883), 21. See further below, note 66, for a third error in their reporting of previous editors’ decisions regarding this seven-line stanza.
- 58 Jeremy Smith and Christian Kay, “The Pragmatics of Punctuation in Older Scots,” in *Communicating Early English Manuscripts*, ed. Päivi Pahta and

Andreas H. Jucker (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 212–25 (215–16). Samuels firmly established this usage (“Chaucerian Final -E”), while Eric Weiskott, too, citing “monosyllabic weak plural ‘long’, monosyllabic plural ‘lokkes’, and metrical demotion of ‘lokkes’,” concludes that “to judge from metrical phonology, Chaucer did not compose *Adam Scriveyn*”: “*Adam Scriveyn* and Chaucer’s Metrical Practice,” *MÆ* 86 (2017): 147–51 (148, 149). He is quite right that *lokkes* must be monosyllabic and metrically demoted for the line to scan properly; my approach, undertaken before he kindly shared his note with me, assumes as a given that that is impossible and thus that the line has an extra foot.

- 59 Respectively, Koch, ed., *Chaucer’s “Minor Poems,”* 12, for which see his discussion in “Textkritische Bemerkungen zu Chaucers ‘Kleineren Dichtungen,’” *Anglia* 53 (1929): 1–101 (40); Skeat, *Complete Works*, noting that Sweet, too, omitted it (539).
- 60 See Mize, “Adam, and Chaucer’s Words unto Him,” 364–68 for discussion of Adam’s *long lokkes* in the context of Chaucer’s depictions of fashionable men and of the Genesis story.
- 61 O’Connell notes the unusual spelling as well, saying that *most* is usually used in “the imperative sense,” by which he means def. 2a, “must” in present tense with future meaning, a problem that disappears “if we read the poem with an awareness that Dante has treated the *scalle* as the miserable end that awaits falsifiers” (“*Adam Scriveyn* and the Falsifiers of Dante’s *Inferno*,” 49).
- 62 Koch writes: “ist *most* als Konjunktiv natürlich *moste* zu schreiben oder besser durch *moote* zu ersetzen”: “Textkritische Bemerkungen,” 40.
- 63 I am grateful to Stephen Barney for advice on this and other matters, which does not imply any endorsement on his part of my argument.
- 64 Writing about “but if” conditional clauses, Tauno F. Mustanoja notes that “when the verb of the principal clause expresses volition (wish, exhortation, command, and the like), the conditional clause usually has the subjunctive”: *A Middle English Syntax, Part I: Parts of Speech* (Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 1960), 469; Barney confirms to me that *wryte* here must be disyllabic. See also, e.g., “And glád/lier Í / wol wríte, ð / 3ow lést/e” (*Troilus* v.1777).
- 65 Steven R. Guthrie identifies anapests in lines that are clearly decasyllabic, that is, in which the anapest he identifies is an effect of a movement of stress from its expected location rather than what it would be here, a substitution for an iamb (“Prosody and the Study of Chaucer: A Generative Reply to Halle-Keyser,” *ChauR* 23 [1988]: 30–49; see list p. 31, all of which are decasyllabic). Be that as it may, Guthrie also says that these “strange-sounding anapests ... do not occur very often, but when they do they are purposeful, and English poetry would be poorer without the lines in which they appear” (45), a judgment that would be difficult to apply to line 4 of “Adam Scryveyne.”
- 66 Respectively, Koch, ed., *Chaucer’s “Minor Poems,”* 12; Skeat, *Complete Works*, 539. Pace and David, *Minor Poems*, 137, erroneously cite Koch as including *more*.

- 67 This is the sole instance quoted in *MED*, s.v. “renewen” (v.(1)), 1(b), “to correct (copied material), revise,” so the editors clearly take *renuwe* to be in apposition, rather than subordinate, to *corect*.
- 68 Smith and Kay, “The Pragmatics of Punctuation in Older Scots,” 215 (quotation); Koch, “Textkritische Bemerkungen,” 40.
- 69 Barney, *Studies in “Troilus,”* 98. M. L. Samuels notes the presence of “the single, tantalising instance of *thorugh*” at 11.616 (“Chaucer’s Spelling” [1983], in Samuels and Smith, *The English of Chaucer and His Contemporaries*, 23–37 [32]).
- 70 Samuels “Chaucer’s Spelling,” 32.
- 71 Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition*, 234; he is not discussing “Adam Scryveyne” here.
- 72 Boffey and Edwards, “‘Chaucer’s Chronicle,’” 207–208.
- 73 O’Connell, “*Adam Scriveyn* and the Falsifiers of Dante’s *Inferno*,” 54 n.7, citing Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition*, 56, on Gower’s employment of scribes. O’Connell says that Stedeman was working in London in the 1380s whereas Pynkhurst joined the Scriveners Company only in 1392, but this does not stand up given that Pynkhurst is in fact one of the first to record his confirmation in the Common Paper, whose origins post-date those of the Company itself.
- 74 Edwards, “Chaucer and ‘Adam Scriveyn’”; Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 254.
- 75 Gillespie, “Reading Adam’s Words,” 271, 272.
- 76 Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 254.
- 77 Pynkhurst’s status as Chaucer’s scribe and affiliate of the Mercers, who met in the Church of St. Thomas of Acre (or Acon) (see Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 109–11), features prominently in my essay “Adventurous Custance: St. Thomas of Acre and Chaucer’s *Man of Law’s Tale*,” in *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative*, ed. Laura L. Howes (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), 43–59, which was among the first studies, perhaps the very first, to engage with Mooney’s essay.
- 78 Gross, “The Short Poems,” 1083; cf. Mooney: “though a few scholars have questioned the authenticity of Chaucer’s authorship of the poem” (she here cites Edwards and Boffey, “‘Chaucer’s Chronicle’”), “the poem is generally accepted into the canon, and indeed,” Gross “even commented, ‘No one has doubted Chaucer’s authorship’” (“Chaucer’s Scribe,” 98 n.4). But this no more constitutes evidence for the attribution than does Edwards’s, Weiskott’s, and my skepticism in itself constitute evidence against it.
- 79 Megan L. Cook, “‘Here Taketh the Makere of This Book His Leve’: The *Retraction* and Chaucer’s Works in Tudor England,” *Studies in Philology* 113 (2016): 32–54 (54).

2 The Pynkhurst Canon

- 1 Green, “Early History,” 3. For another account and summary see *Scriveners’ Company Common Paper 1357–1628 with a Continuation to 1678*, ed. Francis

- W. Steer (London Record Society, 1968), available via www.british-history.ac.uk, a volume that, however, “is littered with elementary errors of transcription and translation, some so crucial that ... later researchers have been led seriously astray” (Green, 2). See Green, 20, for both transcription and English translation of Pynkhurst’s confirmation.
- 2 See Jackson J. Campbell, “A New *Troilus* Fragment,” *PMLA* 73 (1958): 305–308, with complete facsimile, which deems the hand similar to Hand 1 of London, BL MS Harley 3943 of the *Troilus* – that is, the Hm 114 scribe (see [Chapter 4](#)). First attributed to B by Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 170; see also Doyle, “The Copyist of the Ellesmere *Canterbury Tales*,” in *The Ellesmere Chaucer: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. Martin Stevens and Daniel Woodward (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1997), 49–67 (58–59). This is “universally accepted as written by the same hand that copied the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts” (Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 98). I will call this the “Cecil fragment.”
 - 3 A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, “A Paleographical Introduction,” in *The Canterbury Tales: A Facsimile and Transcription of the Hengwrt Manuscript, with Variants from the Ellesmere Manuscript*, ed. Paul G. Ruggiers (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), xxxv: “It may be his work, but we hesitate to assert it.” Doyle later expressed “serious hesitation about attributing Kk to the same hand” as Hg-El (“Copyist,” 60; also 64), as does Daniel W. Mosser, “Manuscript Description,” in *The Hengwrt Chaucer Digital Facsimile (2000): Manuscript Description: Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth MS 392 D (olim Hengwrt MS 154)*, via <http://server30087.uk2net.com/canterburytalesproject.com>, para. on “Hands.” It is accepted by Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 91 n.54; Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 98, 114; and Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 69 and n.13.
 - 4 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript.” This manuscript’s *Piers* is sigil W because Thomas Wright printed it in his 1843 edition; for the sake of convenience I use it for all texts in this manuscript. “Crist made to man a fair present” is item 611 in *A New Index of Middle English Verse*, ed. Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards (London: British Library, 2005).
 - 5 “A great student of scribal hands, the late Jeremy J. Griffiths, was convinced that [this fragment] was ‘Scribe B,’” says Ralph Hanna, *Introducing English Medieval Book History: Manuscripts, Their Producers and Their Readers* (Liverpool University Press, 2013), 146 n.10. This seems improbable to me; Malcolm Parkes, too, “would certainly demur on ‘the Holloway fragment’” according to Hanna (*ibid.*). Information and a facsimile are available at <http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/>.
 - 6 Kathleen L. Scott sees this as “possible to add” to those identified by Doyle and Parkes, but she does not pursue the case, keeping her focus on the artists of the borders: “An Hours and Psalter by Two Ellesmere Illuminators,” in Stevens and Woodward, eds., *The Ellesmere Chaucer*, 87–119 (87).
 - 7 Estelle Stubbs, “A New Manuscript by the Hengwrt/Ellesmere Scribe? Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 393D,” *JEBS* 5 (2002): 161–68, tentatively attributes this to the Hg-El scribe while also, given that its aspect is different and that the tremolos are in a different ink,

allowing that they might be the products of a scribe copying his style, or of his work as corrector and finisher. Mooney first suggested that this was in Pynkhurst's hand with corrections in Chaucer's, and possible referent of "Adam Scryveyne" ("Chaucer's Scribe," 103 and n.23), then said that he merely "embellished" it ("Vernacular Literary Manuscripts and Their Scribes," in *The Production of Books in England 1350–1500*, ed. Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin [Cambridge University Press, 2011], 192–211 [199 n.27]), before she and Stubbs unequivocally identified Scribe B as its copyist (*Scribes and the City*, 68).

- 8 Alan J. Fletcher, "The Criteria for Scribal Attribution: Dublin, Trinity College, MS 244, Some Early Copies of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, and the Canon of Adam Pynkhurst Manuscripts," *RES* 58 (2007): 597–632, cautiously attributes this to Pynkhurst. Mooney and Stubbs do not include it in their list "because we have not examined it at first hand and find it difficult to make a secure identification from the images attached to Fletcher's article" (*Scribes and the City*, 68 n.5). The attribution is rejected by Simon Horobin, "The Criteria for Scribal Attribution: Dublin, Trinity College MS 244 Reconsidered," *RES* 60 (2009): 371–81, to which Fletcher responds in what appears to me as an intriguing dismantling of the very criteria by which he sought to include this manuscript: "What Did Adam Pynkhurst (Not) Write? A Reply to Dr Horobin," *RES* 61 (2010): 690–710.
- 9 Simon Horobin, "Adam Pinkhurst, Geoffrey Chaucer, and the Hengwrt Manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales*," *ChauR* 44 (2010): 351–67 (354–56); accepted and discussed by Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 72–73. Discussed in the Conclusion.
- 10 Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," 106–109. See [Chapter 3](#).
- 11 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 78–79 and Fig. 4.7. See [Chapter 3](#), note 57.
- 12 Stubbs, acting on a tip from Andrew Prescott, brought this to light in Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 80–82 and Fig. 4.9.
- 13 Simon Horobin, "Adam Pinkhurst and the Copying of British Library, MS Additional 35287 of the B Version of *Piers Plowman*," *YLS* 23 (2009): 61–83, endorsed by Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 68. Discussed in [Chapter 3](#).
- 14 Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," 110–11, where she includes fol. 111r, including the 1392–93 accounts, as definitely Pynkhurst's. Lisa Jefferson, *The Medieval Account Books of the Mercers of London: An Edition and Translation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 10–11, attributes that page to a different hand, as does Mooney now (*Scribes and the City*, 67–68 n.4). Mooney had originally attributed much more of the Mercers' accounts to Pynkhurst, but has retreated from that as well (*ibid.*, 83 and n.51).
- 15 Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," 99–101.
- 16 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 75–79, discussed in [Chapter 5](#).
- 17 Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," 100.
- 18 Doyle and Parkes, "Production of Copies," 167–68.

- 19 Respectively, M. B. Parkes, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes: A Closer Look at Scribes. The Lyell Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford 1999* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 149; Doyle and Parkes, “Paleographical Introduction,” xxxv.
- 20 Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 168, 170.
- 21 M. B. Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands, 1250–1500* (1969; reprinted with minor revisions 1979; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), xxvi.
- 22 Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 168.
- 23 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 100.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 137.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 138. Mooney does provide a “Detailed Analysis of the Hand of Adam Pinkhurst” (123–38), but it does not offer evidence that Pynkhurst’s confirmation is in Scribe B’s hand. For one, it is taken over almost verbatim from Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” published before Pynkhurst entered the picture. In both essays it assumes the identifications as givens. See further below.
- 26 Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 168.
- 27 Most conveniently via <http://hdl.huntington.org/cdm> for El, and www.llgc.org.uk/?id=257 for Hg. Also, Ruggiers, ed., *The Canterbury Tales: A Facsimile and Transcription of the Hengwrt Manuscript*, and *The Canterbury Tales: The New Ellesmere Chaucer Monochromatic Facsimile (of Huntington Library MS El 26 C 9)*, ed. Daniel Woodward and Martin Stevens (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1997).
- 28 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 125, citing Doyle and Parkes, “Paleographical Introduction,” xxxviii.
- 29 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 125.
- 30 They cite the “similar decoration of ascenders with tremolo”: Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 97 n.66, referring to *English Court Hand, A.D. 1066 to 1500*, ed. Charles Johnson and Hilary Jenkinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915), part 2, plate xxxa, which Stubbs brought to their attention. See [Figure 6](#) below.
- 31 Facsimile available via www.trin.cam.ac.uk/library/wren-digital-library, fols. 2r top line, 13v on the manuscript’s sole extant catchword. On the former see its entry in www.medievalscribes.com.
- 32 See LMA, DL/AL/C/002/MS09051/001/001 (Diocese of London Collection), fols. 78v/124v, 86r/133r, 96Br/126r, and 140r/188r, reproduced in my “Scribes, Misattributed,” 76, Fig. 6.
- 33 Elizabeth Danbury, “The Decoration and Illumination of Royal Charters in England, 1250–1509: An Introduction,” in *England and Her Neighbours, 1066–1453: Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais*, ed. Michael Jones and Malcolm Vale (London: Hambledon, 1989), 157–79 (163). See, e.g., Kew, National Archives, DR 18/1/706, a charter of Edward I, April 3, 1291 (on deposit at Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust; image available via <http://collections.shakespeare.org.uk>); Letters patent of Edward II granting lands to John de Warena, August 4, 1316 (Kew, National Archives E 41/495/(a), Danbury’s Figure 1c); Edward II’s 1327 charter establishing Oriel College,

- image available via <https://commons.wikimedia.org>; Suffolk Record Office, C/1/1/8, Inspeximus of August 1378, image of relevant portion available via www.suffolkarchives.co.uk: see Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 260, at that point the earliest instance cited against Mooney’s claim regarding the motif’s distinctiveness to Pynkhurst; Paris, Archives Nationales, J. 644, no. 35 (5), signet letters close of 1385 in which Richard II asks Charles VI of France to send him safe conduct for English proctors, for which see Pierre Chaplais, *English Medieval Diplomatic Practice*, 2 parts (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1975), 1:16–17, 2:39.
- 34 All items here cited in the LMA. Deeds and Wills: e.g., CLA/023/DW/01/111 (roll 112, 1383–84), number 79; .../112 (roll 113, 1384–85), number 87; etc. Plea and Memoranda Rolls: e.g., CLA/024/01/02, roll 24 (former ref. A23; 1380), membrs. 6r, 8r; roll 29 (former ref. A28), membr. 5r (May 1387); roll 34 (former ref. A33; 1394–95), membrs. 5v, 6r, 6v; roll 37 (former ref. A36), membr. 4r (April 1397); roll 44 (former ref. A43; 1414), membr. 8v. Letter Book H (COL/AD/01/008), fols. 170r (1383), 189v (1385); Letter Book I (.../009), fol. 118r (1413). Mayor’s Court File Original Bills MC. 1/2A (CLA/024/02/003), item 3 (ca. 1379); MC. 1/2 (CLA/024/02/002), item 213 (1405–6).
 - 35 The Petitions of the Cordwainers, Goldsmiths, and Embroiderers: Kew, National Archives SC 8/20/998, 8/198/9882, and SC 8/20/1000, available via www.nationalarchives.gov.uk. See further below, [Chapter 3](#), [note 57](#).
 - 36 Scriveners Company Common Paper, pp. 1, 2, 3, 5; see Warner, “Scribes, Misattributed,” 78, Fig. 7. Roberts cites the motif’s appearance on page 2 (“On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 260). Mooney’s comment to Green that these pages “may have been Adam Pinkhurst’s” can only respond to this feature, since his “own slight preference ... for Martin Seman” (“Early History,” 5) is supported by the precise match between this hand’s aspect and letter forms and those of Seman’s own confirmation (p. 53).
 - 37 London, Mercers’ Company, Wardens’ Account Book, fols. A2v, 50v, 56v. Fol. 50v contains accounts from 1409–10; 56v, from 1411–12; A2v, in the same hand as 11r–64r, to 1404 (Jefferson, *Medieval Account Books of the Mercers*, 10, 58). In “Chaucer’s Scribe” Mooney wrote that those on 50v and 56v were “probably” Pynkhurst’s (110; see 111 n.55; she does not cite the one on A2v), but now says they are “more likely to have been that of the principal clerk of the company,” that is, Martin Kelom (Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 83; see 83 n.51 for the change in attribution). Jefferson refers to the Pynkhurst possibility, but notes differences from the hand responsible for fols. 6r–10v, which I attribute to Pynkhurst in the next section, that have now convinced Mooney. See Jefferson, 10 n.40, 11 n.41 for other possibilities as this clerk; “All in all,” though, she concludes, “it would seem that the scribe of these pages was much more probably a professional scribe, scrivener or clerk” than that he was Kelom (10).
 - 38 The pages with Rolle’s *Form of Living* and “Crist made to man a fair present” have ascenders and tremolos on every side, but oblique lines appear only on 141v.

- 39 Section-opening lines of main text occasionally have the decorated ascenders (e.g., 2r, 133r [no decoration], 153r, 153v, 204r), but they always appear below an incipit that is likewise decorated. Nearly all this sort of decoration in Hg appears on the incipits and explicits of the prologues and tales.
- 40 Mosser, “Manuscript Description,” para. on “Hands.”
- 41 W has 96 instances over 49 of its 294 sides (including the Rolle and lyric which have no instances, as they consistently feature only ascenders and tremolos among Pynkhurst’s repertoire), on fols. 3v, 10v, 11v, 15v, 16v, 22r, 23r, 24r, 24v, 25v, 26r, 27v, 30v, 32v, 33r, 34v, 35v, 38v, 41v, 43r, 46v, 47v, 49v, 50r, 52r, 53v, 55r, 55v, 56v, 62v, 63r, 66v, 73r, 74v, 81r, 81v, 83r, 86v, 90v, 93v, 99v, 101v, 103r, 104v, 112v, 119r, 119v, 125v, 130v. N has one on its one side; O has eight on its ten sides, so the total is 105 instances over 305 sides. Hg has four over three of its 495 sides (153v, 204r, 245v); El, 49 in total over 34 of its 464 sides: 1v, 3v, 5r, 7r, 16v, 21r, 36r, 49r, 50r, 51v, 80r, 87v, 89v, 93v, 97r, 103r, 106v, 108r, 128v, 129v, 132r, 133r, 144v, 151r, 168v, 176r, 177r, 177v, 185v, 187r, 189v, 196v, 200v, and 214r. It is possible that some instances have been cropped in El (119v, 120r, etc.).
- 42 This assumes that the order is W > Hg > El, of course; Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 113–14 adheres to this order too, in large part on the authority of Samuels, “Scribe of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere Manuscripts.” W is so close in presentation to the confirmation that I think a date of ca. 1395 is right. But if it is much later then the problems with such a proposal are only the greater.
- 43 Their identical aspects are the more apparent by comparison with an exactly contemporaneous appearance of the term in an Anglicana Formata hand: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 316 (Higden’s *Polychronicon*, ca. 1394–97), fol. 71v, col. a, line 10 (Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, plate 5[iii]).
- 44 Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 255.
- 45 The opening side of Organ’s accounts, fol. 6r, features six of each form of *a*, Secretary and Anglicana (one cited here); its reverse, 6v, triples the ratio in favor of Secretary forms; and by 7r Secretary dominates, at twenty-nine to one, a dominance that lasts through the following folios. In his confirmation Pynkhurst employs eighty-seven Secretary forms and nine Anglicana ones. On Anglicana Formata, see Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, xvi–xvii, plates 4–6.
- 46 This description of Bastard Anglicana is from Thorlac Turville-Petre and Hoyt N. Duggan’s *The Piers Plowman Electronic Archive* edition of W’s *Piers* text (2000), Introduction, 1.6, “Handwriting.” This and all editions of this project I will cite are available in web editions of 2014 via <http://piers.chass.ncsu.edu/texts>. See Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, xvii–xxi, xxiii–xxiv, plates 7–8.
- 47 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 138.
- 48 In “Scribes, Misattributed,” I wrote that Mooney “cites only those five motifs [ascenders, slash-and-dot, oblique lines, tremolo, three curving lines] shared as well” by Hg and El (88), but this was inaccurate, as she mentions the three curving lines (prev. note) only when comparing P and W.

- 49 Doyle, “Copyist,” 52, commenting on the presence of Bastard Anglicana in Hg but not El.
- 50 I agree with Roberts’s strong objection to Mooney’s attribution of these accounts to B (“On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 255–57), even if Mooney’s conflation of that scribe with Pynkhurst, together with the initial discussion of much more than these few folios, confuses the matter. Neither was Pynkhurst’s (i.e., not Scribe B’s) copying of Trinity B.15.17, to which we now turn, yet apparent.
- 51 Anne F. Sutton, “Fifteenth-Century Mercers and the Written Word: Mercers and their Scribes and Scriveners,” in *Recording Medieval Lives: Proceedings of the 2005 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Julia Boffey and Virginia Davis (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2009), 42–58 (48). She discusses the scribes of the *Wardens’ Accounts* on 47 and notes that “[a]n outside scrivener was employed to make a fair copy of all the final and audited accounts of the year’s business if the company beadle did not do it” (48).
- 52 For particularly dense sections see fols. 38v (six instances) and 99v (five). Turville-Petre and Duggan, “Handwriting,” cite this feature. In the remaining texts the only two curls are to be found in marginal notations (136v, 137r), in keeping with the absence or reduced prominence of many other decorative features.
- 53 Most conveniently via www.trin.cam.ac.uk/library/wren-digital-library; also, for *Piers* alone, Turville-Petre and Duggan’s edition, whose images, however, are not as sharp as those on Trinity’s own site. The Rolle text’s layout – prose, two columns a side – does not permit such initials, though a number of sides have large capital letters: 131r, 137v, 142r, 143v, 144v, 146v.
- 54 See fols. iv, 5v, 9r, 10v, 11v, 13r, 14v, 16v, 17v, 20v, 21v, 22r, 24r, 24v, 34v, 36r, 38v, 41r, 43r, 46v, 50r, 52r, 53v, 55r, 63r, 68v, 70v, 71v, 73v, 74v, 75v, 77v, 78r, 83r, 84r, 96v, 97r, 99v, 100r, 103r, 104v, 105v, 107r, 112v, 114r, 114v, 119r, 125v, 130v; in second place, “the normal enlargement of the minuscule closed two-storey form” that dominates El and Hg (Doyle, “Copyist,” 53), lags behind with nineteen appearances: fols. 4r, 16r, 20r, 32r, 39v, 44r, 50v, 57v, 62r, 64r, 65r, 80r, 80v, 84v, 90r, 98r, 104r, 124v, 127r.
- 55 The three curved lines breaking a straight line are found on the decorated initials on fols. iv, 9r, 10v, 11v, 13r, 15r, 16v, 17v, 20v, 38v, 41v, 43r, 46v, 50r, 53v, 55r, 63r, 68v, 71v, 75v, 77v, 78r, 83r, 97r, 100r, 104v, 107r, 114r, 114v, 119r, 125v, 130v (with four other instances in its explicit).
- 56 See the initials on fols. iv, 9r, 11v, 20v, 23r, 49v, 56v, 68v, 104v, 125v, 130v.
- 57 Doyle, “Copyist,” 53, saying that this form is “used only as the first tall elegant ornamented letter on a verse page, of capital form,” citing these three; it is “not to be found in Hg as far as I have noticed.”
- 58 Parkes cites Trinity B.15.17, via its appearance in *Facsimiles of Twelve Early English Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Cambridge*, ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford University Press, 1913), plate vii, displaying most of fol. 5r, as “an example of Bastard Anglicana used for a heading in a manuscript written in Anglicana Formata” (*English Cursive Book Hands*, xviii n.3); see xvii–xviii for

his description, and above, [note 46](#) for another description of W's use of this script.

- 59 *The Dd Manuscript: A Digital Edition of Cambridge University Library MS Dd.4.24 of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales,"* ed. Orietta Da Rold, The Norman Blake Editions of the *Canterbury Tales*, www.chaucermss.org/dd, e.g., fols. 39r, 151v, 186v.
- 60 On passus divisions at fols. 5r, 8v, 13r, 19v, 23r, 35r, 47r, 86r, 101v, 115v, 124r (never on boxed Latin tags or quotations within the text), the left legs of ornamental initial A's usually occupied by the three wavy lines: 70v, 96v, 99v, 103r, 105v, 112v; and the empty spaces at the ends of paragraphs in the Rolle text, in normal rather than red ink: 133r, 135r, 135v, 137v, 138r (two separate sites), 142r, 145v, 146r. This is a tally of sites at which snowballs appear, not of sets.
- 61 Jane Stevenson, *The "Laterculus Malalianus" and the School of Archbishop Theodore* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 106; see also 103–104.
- 62 An angel fish is at Hg, fol. 112r; minnows, at El, fols. 29r, 39r, 70r, 87r, 88v, 111v, 129r, 178v, 201r.
- 63 I have encountered Secretary single-compartment a's on fols. 24r line 20 *garte* (noted by Turville-Petre and Duggan, "Handwriting"), 114r lines 15 *Adam* and 25 *vendage*; and 127r line 24 *sauz*. This might well be the lot: in a random sample of 10 percent of the *Piers* text's leaves, Thomas J. Farrell "found no examples of secretary *a* among 1,491 minuscule anglicana *a* graphs" ("Secretary *a* in Ellesmere's Latin Quotations," *ChauR* 52 [2017]: 396–425 [401 n.15]). "The restriction of these features of the new script suggests that the scribe's repertoire had been only slightly affected by it or else that he, or his director, felt the traditional style more appropriate for the copying of vernacular texts," say Doyle and Parkes regarding the few such forms in Hg ("Paleographical Introduction," xxxv); the latter explanation fits W nicely. Farrell produces evidence that the relatively frequent use of the form in the Latin glosses of El is purposeful and derives from a Chaucerian intent. Roberts cites the different mixture of Secretary and Anglicana a's between P and the Petition of the Folk of Mercerye in her argument against the latter's attribution to Pynkhurst (an argument that I endorse, though not on these grounds; see [Chapter 3](#)): "On Giving Scribe B a Name," 254–55. See above, [note 45](#) on use of Secretary and Anglicana a in P and O; over the course of the latter the scribe went instantly from near-even numbers of each to near-unanimous Secretary form.
- 64 Doyle, "Copyist," 52.
- 65 Turville-Petre and Duggan, "Handwriting."
- 66 I have found instances on, e.g., Hg 17r header, 57v last line of the *Cook's Tale*; El bottom lines 88v, 190r. The only one in the main text above final line I have encountered is El 11r line 34, *slough*. This is a superficial survey, but those looking in more detail will be hard-pressed to find anything at all close to the density apparent in [Figure 3](#).
- 67 Roberts, "On Giving Scribe B a Name," 260.
- 68 Turville-Petre and Duggan, "Handwriting."
- 69 *Ibid.* Cf. Fletcher, "Criteria," 613 and n.51.

- 70 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 137. I normalize her folio citations so that “ix recto” = “9r.”
- 71 Cf. *ibid.*
- 72 Hg’s T “has a considerable range of variations of the same basic form: the head stroke is flat or arched, left free or looped closely or widely back into the bowl, or underneath” (Doyle and Parkes, “Paleographical Introduction,” xxxvi). Looped T forms do occasionally occur, as in Hg fol. 23v, lines 2, 35, 36; but that side has eleven non-looped versions.
- 73 Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 249.
- 74 See note 7. A full digital facsimile is at <http://hdl.handle.net/10107/4398051>.
- 75 “It has traditionally been agreed by scholars that none of the extant copies of Chaucer’s works dates from the poet’s lifetime,” as Simon Horobin has observed (*The Language of the Chaucer Tradition* [Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003], 36), and it seems almost certain that Pynkhurst would have embellished it before his retirement to Surrey in the year of Chaucer’s death.
- 76 Doyle and Parkes, “Paleographical Introduction,” xxxv. On lxviii they report the earliest facsimile of Hg, fol. 204r, in *Autotype Specimens of the Chief Chaucer MSS, Part i*, Chaucer Society, Series 1, no. 48, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: Trübner, 1876). Then came *The Ellesmere Chaucer Reproduced in Facsimile*, preface by Alix Egerton, 2 vols. (Manchester University Press, 1911); finally, Tr, in *Facsimiles of Twelve Early English Manuscripts*.
- 77 *Piers Plowman: The B Version*, ed. George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson, rev. edn. (1975; London: Athlone, 1988), 13 n.91. “The old notion that simply by undertaking to edit a text a man becomes a palæographer has been discredited in our time with the growth in knowledge and understanding of vernacular manuscripts”; they acknowledge “the patient instruction of” T. J. Brown, Doyle, and N. R. Ker: “Our particular obligation is to Dr Doyle, who read and checked our descriptions of manuscripts” (vi).
- 78 Doyle and Parkes, “Paleographical Introduction,” xxxiii, and Doyle, “Copyist,” 54, 67 n.23.
- 79 Doyle, “Remarks on Surviving Manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*,” in *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honour of G. H. Russell*, ed. Gregory Kratzmann and James Simpson (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1986), 35–48 (39). For the manuscripts in this scribe’s hand see Turville-Petre and Duggan’s edition of W, Introduction, 1.1, “Date,” second note, and Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 70.
- 80 Hanna, *Introducing English Medieval Book History*, 146 n.10; Robinson, too, remarks that Parkes was “unconvinced” by Mooney’s Pynkhurst identification (review of *Scribes and the City*, 396).
- 81 Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 257–59.
- 82 Hanna, *Introducing English Medieval Book History*, 146; he had earlier said merely that W was in “a script style, particularly in its presentation of the Latin, very reminiscent of Doyle-Parkes scribe B,” referring to Horobin and Mooney “for a stronger claim that the hand is in fact scribe B’s” (*London Literature, 1300–1380* [Cambridge University Press, 2005], 244). I accepted

the attribution up through 2014. For a recent essay that assumes its accuracy see Poos and Rust, “Of *Piers*, Polltaxes and Parliament.”

- 83 Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, Maidie Hilmo, and Linda Olson, *Opening up Middle English Manuscripts: Literary and Visual Approaches* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 39–40, while Hilmo remarks that Scribe B (whom she does not necessarily take to be Pynkhurst) “possibly” copied W (*ibid.*, 248). The sentiment is common.
- 84 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 71–72.
- 85 *Ibid.*, 69.
- 86 Respectively, Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 170, and Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 70. Roberts adds that W’s minims are “sometimes backwards-tilting, and the body of the letters looks smaller in relation to the ascenders and descenders and less pleasingly assured than in the Hengwrt-Ellesmere group” (“On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 259).
- 87 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 70.
- 88 Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 259.
- 89 Noelle Phillips, “Seeing Red: Reading Rubrication in Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 201’s *Piers Plowman*,” *ChauR* 47 (2013): 439–64 (448).
- 90 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 72; on 70 they say that this text’s words “are set more closely” than in *Piers Plowman* but I disagree.
- 91 *Ibid.*, 68. In “Chaucer’s Scribe,” which reprints the Appendix almost verbatim, Mooney says that this material is hers alone (123); Horobin attributes the Appendix of their joint essay to Mooney in “Adam Pinkhurst and the Copying of British Library, MS Additional 35287,” 72–73 and 72 n.20.
- 92 Doyle, “Copyist,” 53.
- 93 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 102, 108 (their Fig. 4).
- 94 *Ibid.*, 68, continuing with the remark with which the previous paragraph began (“our Appendix and the accompanying illustrations ...”).
- 95 Doyle, “Copyist,” 54, which Horobin and Mooney cite as “perhaps most distinctive of this hand” and “again a distinguishing feature,” respectively (“A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 103). They change Doyle’s “final high” 8-shaped s to “an unusually large” one.
- 96 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 123.
- 97 Quotations from Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 103, 104; also, Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 124–25.
- 98 Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 259.
- 99 In his remark that the similarities Alan Fletcher identifies between Dublin, Trinity College MS 244 and Pynkhurst’s manuscripts “can be attributed to the conventions of the anglicana formata script”: Horobin, “Criteria,” 371, responding to Fletcher, “Criteria.” Roberts comments on Fletcher’s use of the list “virtually as an identikit” (“On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 259).
- 100 See above, note 35. Mooney remarks that “[i]n aspect” the Petition of the Folk of Mercerye “most resembles the Hengwrt manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales*, an Anglicana formata both rounded and vertical” (“Chaucer’s Scribe,” 125), while conversely Roberts comments that the petition’s mix of Anglicana

- and Secretary letter forms is “very different” from the mix of those forms in Pynkhurst’s confirmation (“On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 254). The aspect of the “less formal, more hasty script” of the Leathersellers’ and White Tawiers’ petition, say Mooney and Stubbs, “matches other less formal examples of his writing in the Mercers’ Petition” the Cecil fragment of *Troilus*, and the Kk.1.3 fragment of the *Tales (Scribes and the City*, 79; see their fig. 4.7). See further [Chapter 3](#), where I voice my skepticism of the attribution, though these petitions do indeed look much more like B’s than does anything I attribute to Pynkhurst.
- 101 Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” 260.
 - 102 On the plausibility of this idea, see, e.g., Da Rold, *Dd Manuscript*, 5.9, “The Scribe.”
 - 103 C. Paul Christianson, “A Community of Book Artisans in Chaucer’s London,” *Viator* 20 (1989): 207–18 (218).
 - 104 Linne R. Mooney, “Locating Scribal Activity in Late-Medieval London,” in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, ed. Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney (York Medieval Press, 2008), 183–204 (190).

3 Pynkhurst’s London English and the Dilemma of Copy-Text

- 1 Kerby-Fulton, *Opening up Middle English Manuscripts*, 81. See [Chapter 2](#), note 83.
- 2 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 90.
- 3 Simon Horobin, “Mapping the Words,” in Gillespie and Wakelin, *Production of Books*, 59–78 (69), citing McIntosh, “A New Approach to Middle English Dialectology,” *English Studies* 44 (1963): 1–11 (6–7), the manuscripts being Oxford, Bodleian MS Rawlinson A.389 and Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.8; also *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (hereafter *LALME*), ed. Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, and Michael Benskin, with the assistance of Margaret Laing and Keith Williamson, 4 vols. (Aberdeen University Press, 1986), 1:4.1.2.
- 4 Simon Horobin, “The Nature of Material Evidence,” in *Imagining Medieval English: Language Structures and Theories, 500–1500*, ed. Tim William Machan (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 147–65 (157).
- 5 Jacob Thaisen, however, argues that the linguistic profile for BL Additional MS 35286 of the *Canterbury Tales*, clearly not by Pynkhurst or Scribe B, “matches the profile for [W] more closely than does the profile for either Hg or El,” so that “all that Horobin and Mooney (2004) have shown is that [W’s] text is written in a variety of London-Westminster English that is close to Chaucer’s own dialect”: “Adam Pynkhurst’s Short and Long Forms,” in *Scribes, Printers, and the Accidentals of Their Texts*, ed. Jacob Thaisen and Hanna Rutkowska (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 73–90 (84).
- 6 Samuels, “Chaucer’s Spelling”; Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 82.

- 7 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 82. This sentence might mislead some readers into believing that other scholars have considered the possibility on the basis of handwriting only to demur on the grounds of language. In fact Horobin and Mooney were the first ever to suggest the possibility, so “reluctance” is perhaps not the best term for other critics’ approach to the topic.
- 8 Respectively: Turville-Petre and Duggan’s edition of W, Introduction, 111.1, “Evidence from LALME”; Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 82 n.42; LALME 1:3.2.2.
- 9 Turville-Petre and Duggan, “Evidence from LALME.”
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 LALME, 1:1.4.1–2.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 1:1.4.4. See 1.4.3 on the complicated status of this spoken–written relationship. See also Angus McIntosh, “The Analysis of Written Middle English” (1956), repr. in McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, and Margaret Laing, *Middle English Dialectology: Essays on Some Principles and Problems*, ed. Laing (Aberdeen University Press, 1989), 1–21.
- 13 Horobin’s conflation of yogh and <gh> in his reporting of this information in “Criteria for Scribal Attribution” is noted by Fletcher, “What Did Adam Pynkhurst (Not) Write?,” 707 and n.49. On the importance of including such variants in dialectal analysis see Jacob Thaisen, “Overlooked Variants in the Orthography of British Library, Additional MS 35286,” *JEBS* 11 (2008): 121–43.
- 14 See Doyle and Parkes, “Paleographical Introduction,” xxxvi–xxxvii on *veze* in Hg and on a second yogh in that copy, in the hand of a flourisher of Hg who was not the main scribe (*ibid.*, xxxix), as a painted capital over a guide letter Y (214v). My source for El’s instance in the *Parson’s Tale* is Luigina Marina Domenica Caon, “Authorial or Scribal? Spelling Variation in the Hengwrt and Ellesmere Manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*” (unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Leiden, 2008), 218, and I found El’s on *veze* by looking at its text after becoming aware of Hg’s instance. On this term see *MED*, s.v. “fese” (n.), citing only this and a lyric of ca. 1450; see also s.v. “res” (n.), 1(a), “violent movement, rush,” citing a later manuscript’s spelling *rees* and indicating Hg’s alternative spelling.
- 15 A search for the yogh character in Turville-Petre and Duggan’s edition yields 1531 hits, five of which are double encodings of single instances, and I count 190 on the remaining folios. John H. Fisher remarks on the archaic flavor that Trinity B.15.17’s yogh gives Kane–Donaldson’s edition of *Piers Plowman* (see further below on its role as their copy-text), noting that this sets its text apart both from other early manuscripts of *Piers B* and from Hengwrt and Ellesmere, which use gh/h: “*Piers Plowman* and Chancery Tradition” (1988), rpt. in *The Emergence of Standard English* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 109–20 (119).
- 16 See Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 81 for their chart. For this information I relied on www.chaucermss.org/multitext, *The Multitext Edition: The Norman Blake Editions of “The Canterbury Tales,”* ed. Estelle

- Stubbs, Michael Pidd, Orietta Da Rold, Simon Horobin, and Claire Thomson with Linda Cross (2013); Turville-Petre and Duggan's edition of W; Joseph S. Wittig, *Piers Plowman: Concordance* (London: Continuum, 2001), in which W's text is the basis for the B version's lemmata; and my reading of the text of Rolle's *Form of Living*.
- 17 Horobin and Mooney refer to "the scribe's usage in the *Form*, where neither 'nau3t' nor 'nou3t' is found; here the scribe uses only 'no3t,' 'noght,' and 'nat'" ("A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript," 84), but do not provide its data. None of the relevant terms appears in the poem that concludes the manuscript.
 - 18 *Ibid.*, 83.
 - 19 *Ibid.*, 83–84.
 - 20 *Ibid.*, 84. Samuels identifies a combination of dialect features in MS L (not, though, this term) that, he argues, goes back to Langland ("Langland's Dialect" [1985], in Samuels and Smith, *The English of Chaucer and His Contemporaries*, 70–85 [78]). These seven appearances (those in bold shared with L, for which see Hoyt N. Duggan and Ralph Hanna's 2004 *Electronic Archive* edition) are **ProL.iii**, **i.101**, **v.459**, **v.481**, **x.343**, **xv.375**, and **xix.299**.
 - 21 Those in common are *GP* 756, *KnT* 2068, *KnT* 2649, *PrT* 511, *SNT* 269, *MancT* 338, all in rhyme position with "taught" or "caught." For Hg's remaining five (*KnT* 2021, *MLT* 400, *NPPro* 2802, *MancT* 147, *ParsT* 479), El reads *noght*, while for the three of El's remaining five attested by Hg it reads *Nat* (*KnT* 2765), *noght* (*CLT* 647), and *naght* (*Mel* 1664). The other two are *WBPro* 582, *CYT* 1401. I found these by searching for "naught" in *The Multitext Edition*, but here convert line numbers to those of the *Riverside*.
 - 22 Horobin and Mooney, "A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript," 85.
 - 23 Duggan and Hanna's transcription of L reveals these spellings with yogh: *Theiz* (111.38), *Theize* (1v.66), *þeiz* (1.10), *þeize* (111.149, 111.352, v.268). The remainder are: *Peigh* (x.139), *peigh* (x1.285), *þeighe* (v.600), and *Theigh* (vi.226, vii.198).
 - 24 Horobin and Mooney, "A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript," 85–86. So far as I know the only scholars to have queried this approach are Roberts, "On Giving Scribe B a Name," 260–62, and Kerby-Fulton, who remarks that it "is entirely possible, but other scholars might use this variation to question the attribution" (*Opening up Middle English Manuscripts*, 67).
 - 25 Horobin and Mooney, "A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript," 86.
 - 26 Samuels, "Scribe of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere Manuscripts," 40.
 - 27 I.e., the scribes of Oxford Corpus Christi MS 198 and BL MS Harley 7334, both copied by D (see [Chapter 5](#)); BL Additional MS 35286 (Ad3) and MS Lansdowne 851 (La); and Cambridge University Library MSS Dd.4.24 (Dd; by "Wytton") and Gg.4.27 (Gg) for *The Canterbury Tales*; also, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 61, *Troilus and Criseyde*. For the former I have relied on Stubbs, Pidd, Da Rold, Horobin, and Thomson, *The Multitext Edition*, which enables comparison of these six plus Hg and El for any line.
 - 28 Respectively Horobin, "Adam Pinkhurst and the Copying of Additional 35287," and Turville-Petre, "Putting It Right: The Corrections of Huntington Library MS Hm 128 and BL Additional MS. 35287," *YLS* 16 (2002): 41–65.

- (55); also Eric Eliason, Hoyt N. Duggan, and Thorlac Turville-Petre's 2005 *Electronic Archive* edition of M, Introduction, 11.2, "The Nature of the Corrections: Spelling." The identification of this corrector as B, if not as the Trinity B.15.17 scribe himself, is quite plausible.
- 29 Turville-Petre, "Putting It Right," 63. I searched for "thorough" and the yogh character in Eliason et al.'s edition of M.
 - 30 Horobin and Mooney, "A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript," 67.
 - 31 Horobin, "Nature of Material Evidence," 151.
 - 32 M. L. Samuels, "Some Applications of Middle English Dialectology" (1963), rpt. in McIntosh, Samuels, and Laing, *Middle English Dialectology*, 64–80 (67), which states that Type I uses such forms as *sich* SUCH, *mych* MUCH, *ony* ANY, *silf* SELF, *3ouun* GIVEN. Michael Benskin has since argued for an earlier date for Type IV's emergence: "Some New Perspectives on the Origins of Standard Written English," in *Dialect and Standard Language in the English, Dutch, German and Norwegian Language Areas*, ed. J. A. van Leuvensteijn and J. B. Berns (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1992), 71–105.
 - 33 Samuels, "Some Applications," 70. The references are to Chambers and Daunt, *A Book of London English*, and *The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate, London, A.D. 1387–1439*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS o.s. 78 (London, 1882). Horobin has argued that the distinction between Types II and III is better understood as one of register than chronology, primarily on the grounds that the Type III texts from 1380 to 1400 are all administrative or official while those from 1400 to 1430 are literary and that the spelling "swich" for SUCH appears almost solely, and uniformly, in the latter (*Language of the Chaucer Tradition*, 21–28). Yet "swich" can be a poetic term, which seems right, without any effect on the other Type III terms. The absence of literary manuscripts in London English from 1380 to 1400, and presence of non-literary Type III usages (not "swich," however) in the fifteenth-century London English wills, mitigate the force of this division. Horobin also suggests that Chaucer himself generated many of these Type III forms, which "a close-knit community" of poets and book-producers embraced (22). This claim, though, necessitates the idea "that Hoccleve adopted the Type III system" as one of these "imitators of the Chaucerian style" (*ibid.*) – in other words, that what appears on its face to be the most extensive body of evidence regarding any single Londoner's language in this era does not in fact record its author's own language at all, but rather the language of another man for whose language we have no direct evidence. See further below for Horobin's development of this argument, and [Chapter 6](#) on Hoccleve's language and his putative indebtedness to Chaucer.
 - 34 Samuels, "Some Applications," 70.
 - 35 Turville-Petre and Duggan, "Evidence from LALME," with references to their discussions of phonology and morphology.
 - 36 Kane and Donaldson, *The B Version*, 215 n.181. Samuels is probably correct that Langland's dialect was that of Malvern rather than London ("Langland's Dialect"), but a glance through *Piers Plowman: The C Version*, ed. George

- Russell and George Kane (London: Athlone, 1997), whose language is that he sees as closest to the poet's, San Marino, Huntington Library MS Hm 143 (sigil X of the C version), will reveal many Type 111 forms.
- 37 Turville-Petre and Duggan, "Evidence from LALME." The examples for this text's retention of rounding for OE /eo/ and /ēo/ come from *ibid.*, 111.2.1.2.24.
- 38 Horobin, "Nature of Material Evidence," 152.
- 39 Samuels, "Some Applications," 71. Also, Roberts: "Somehow [Horobin and Mooney] have blended together the views of older scholarly attitudes which approved the 'exceptional consistency' of the TCC Langland with the misrepresentation of Samuels's typology that has got about and, drawing into their paper the notion of a London literary standard, they declare that in language the TCC *Piers Plowman* folios, Hengwrt, and Ellesmere are 'a single scribal idiolect'" ("On Giving Scribe B a Name," 262, quoting Horobin and Mooney, "A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript," 67).
- 40 Samuels, "Scribe of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere Manuscripts," 38, 40. Samuels remarks that "in London ca. 1400 there was as yet no specific standard for scribes to aim at, but there were pressures on them to alter their habits nevertheless" (40), the closest he comes to saying scribes were "required to conform" to any standard in this era.
- 41 Horobin, "Nature of Material Evidence," 151. This is Kew, The National Archives, SC 8/20/997; it is newly edited and easily available in Robert Ellis, "*Verba Vana*: Empty Words in Ricardian London," 2 vols., Ph.D. diss. (Queen Mary, University of London, 2012), 2:430–34, available via <https://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/>, source of my information on its language.
- 42 Jeremy J. Smith, "Language," in *A Concise Companion to Middle English Literature*, ed. Marilyn Corrie (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 145–65 (163).
- 43 Horobin, "Nature of Material Evidence," 152. See above, *note* 33 for his earlier promulgation of this argument, before Pynkhurst was part of the discussion.
- 44 The final four items here are not listed by Horobin, *ibid.* (IF, TOGETHER, -LY, SINCE). I list all forms in the Mercers' petition (Horobin does not record "swich," used twice), the dominant forms of the Trinity *Piers* where it uses more than one, relying on Wittig, *Concordance* (see above for fuller accounts of many of these), and the forms listed in LALME LP 6400 for Hg-El (except for *such* under SUCH and *moche*, *meche* under MUCH: see Horobin and Mooney, "A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript," 82–83 and nn.43, 44).
- 45 Turville-Petre and Duggan, "Evidence from LALME"; Horobin, "The Nature of Material Evidence," 152, 151.
- 46 See Roberts, "On Giving Scribe B a Name," esp. 254–55. She had indicated her doubts that B copied this petition in her *Guide*, 163 ("The scribe was perhaps at work in London as early as 1387–88, if the hand of the Mercers' Petition ... is his"), with reference to Mooney's then-forthcoming "Chaucer's Scribe."
- 47 Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," 106, 108.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 108.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 125.

- 50 Marion Turner, "Conflict," in *Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 258–73 (263).
- 51 Roberts, "On Giving Scribe B a Name," 247, 263.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 254–55. I silently expand Roberts's abbreviations.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 262–63.
- 54 Doyle, "Copyist," 52.
- 55 Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," 124, where she says the sigma form is used "occasionally ... as a final letter in the Hengwrt manuscript, not in the Ellesmere." She says that her Pinkhurst uses sigma-shaped terminal **s** "almost always" in the Mercers' petition (125), but I find no other forms. A facsimile of the petition is available to download from <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk>.
- 56 Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," 125; Roberts, "On Giving Scribe B a Name," 263. See Doyle and Parkes, "Paleographical Introduction," xxxvii–xxxviii on this form in Hg.
- 57 I should have undertaken this close comparison before saying I felt this attribution to be "quite likely" ("Scribes, Misattributed," 78 n.72). When writing that I had more in mind the Leathersellers' and White Tawiers' petition, in French (Kew, The National Archives, SC 8/21/1001B; see Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 78, fig. 4.7), whose **I** forms and top-line ascenders, in particular, looked to me like B's. While this is certainly a better candidate, I am now more skeptical: it lacks the rightward-slant, features only sigma **s** in final position and many more single-compartment **a**'s and rounded **e**'s, **y**'s that look more like the Mercers' petition's than El's or Hg's, and **I**'s unlike anything in those manuscripts.
- 58 See above for the first two, and for discussion of the implications of this attribution for our sense of Chaucer's politics, Mooney's comments in "Chaucer's Scribe," 108 quoted above (see [note 47](#)) and Turner, "Conflict."
- 59 Kane and Donaldson, *The B Version*, 214.
- 60 W. W. Greg, "The Rationale of Copy-Text," *SB* 3 (1950–51): 19–36 (21).
- 61 *Ibid.*, 26.
- 62 Kane and Donaldson, *The B Version*, 215; Greg: "editorial emendations should be made to conform to the habitual spelling of the copy-text" ("Rationale," 30).
- 63 Greg, "Rationale," 20.
- 64 Kerby-Fulton, *Opening up Middle English Manuscripts*, 66. For a helpful conspectus of the topic see Joseph A. Dane, "Copy-Text and Its Variants in Some Recent Chaucer Editions," *SB* 44 (1991): 164–83; for a response to some of his points see Barney, *Studies in "Troilus"*, 12–13 n.9.
- 65 Kane and Donaldson, *The B Version*, 214.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 215 n.179.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 215. In his memoirs, Kane recounts that Donaldson, having collated MSS R (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson Poetry 38) and F (Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 201) against L, and having the benefit of proper training in Middle English philology (unlike Kane himself), recognized that L "undebatably ... had fewer unmistakeable scribal errors than the rest" but also that the spelling and grammar of L rendered it "unsuitable as the linguistic vehicle of a great

- poem. There was the Trinity College B copy in best fourteenth-century London English: *Piers Plowman* would have been more easily accessible and, for all we know the poet might have written in that dialect, whatever regional form Langland had learned in childhood.” This realization meant they had to rearrange the collation but fortunately Donaldson had a Guggenheim Fellowship so they were soon back on track. *Kane from Canada*, ed. Mary Kane and Jane Roberts (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016), 263.
- 68 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 93. For a mark of its influence see Kerby-Fulton’s invocation of this “methodologically important article” immediately after citing Kane and Donaldson’s choice of W “as their base text for B.” “This is a very attractive thesis, though not all scholars to date agree with its findings” (*Opening up Middle English Manuscripts*, 66). By “not all scholars” she seems to be referring to Roberts, “On Giving Scribe B a Name,” there cited, and Kerby-Fulton herself had announced at the book’s outset that she was not persevering with the identification of B as scribe of W (see above, [note 1](#)).
- 69 John Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre, eds., *The B-Version Archetype*, in *The Piers Plowman Electronic Archive*, Introduction, v.1, “Choice of Copy-Text.”
- 70 Greg, “Rationale,” 26. Kane’s predecessor as Langland editor R. W. Chambers likewise wrote: “it is important to select as our basic manuscript one which is as free as possible from eccentricities of spelling and of grammar, even though in actual wording it may not be superior, or may even be a little inferior, to a rival manuscript”: “The Manuscripts of *Piers Plowman* in the Huntington Library, and Their Value for Fixing the Text of the Poem,” *Huntington Library Bulletin* 8 (1935): 1–27 (11). Kane and Donaldson, *The B Version*, 214 n.175 cite the first of Greg’s sentences as well as Chambers.
- 71 Kane and Donaldson, *The B Version*, 214 n.178, 214; the phrase “slightly inferior” is from Elsie Blackman, “Notes on the B-Text MSS. of *Piers Plowman*,” *JEGP* 17 (1918): 489–545 (503). Horobin and Mooney seem here to be conflating the Athlone editors’ beliefs with those of A. V. C. Schmidt, whom they quote as saying that W’s “text is far inferior to that of MS L”: *The Vision of Piers Plowman: A Critical Edition of the B-Text*, ed. Schmidt (London: Dent, 1978), xxxix. Horobin and Mooney’s citation says “2nd ed. 1995” after giving the 1978 date, but in that second edition (London: Dent, 1995), which says that “all printings before the current one are to be regarded as superseded” (xi), W’s text is “substantively inferior to that of” MS L (lxxx), which was softened a bit further, to “[s]ubstantively less good,” in Schmidt, *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of the A, B, C and Z Versions*, Vol. 2: *Introduction, Textual Notes, Commentary, Bibliography and Indexical Glossary* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2008), 3.
- 72 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 93–94.
- 73 Greg, “Rationale,” 28; Kane and Donaldson, *The B Version*, 128. Also *Piers Plowman: The A Version*, ed. George Kane, rev. edn (1960; London: Athlone, 1988), 147: “the readings of [his copy-text] are not treated as more authoritative

than those of any other” and “the basic manuscript does not have superior authority.”

- 74 E.g., David Greetham’s remark that their “denial of authority to the B manuscripts” meant that “one either had to accept Kane and Donaldson’s word that they had created Langland for the first time (virtually in despite of the documented textual transmission), or seek to re-edit the work oneself. Perhaps, after all, it might be safer to stay with a version of ‘best-text’ theory, and not to wander into the uncharted territory beyond the archetype” (*Textual Transgressions: Essays Toward the Construction of a Bibliography* [New York, NY: Garland, 1998], 131).
- 75 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 94. Kane and Donaldson do, however, use the term “standard,” in quotation marks. See also above, [note 40](#).
- 76 Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 94, citing John M. Bowers, “*Piers Plowman*’s William Langland: Editing the Text, Writing the Author’s Life,” *YLS* 9 (1995): 65–90 (78). Burrow and Turville-Petre say Kane–Donaldson chose W rather than L “although they admitted that ‘the ideal basic manuscript or copy-text is the one which first provides the closest dialectal and chronological approximation to the poet’s language, and then second, most accurately reflects his original in substantive readings’” (“Choice of Copy-Text”). See above, at [note 69](#), where those editors are again made to “admit” a supposed failure.
- 77 M. L. Samuels, “Scribes and Manuscript Traditions,” in *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts: Essays Celebrating the Publication of “A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English,”* ed. Felicity Riddy (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), 1–7 (5–6). For a still earlier engagement with Kane and Donaldson’s policy, see E. G. Stanley, “The B Version of ‘Piers Plowman’: A New Edition,” *Notes and Queries* n.s. 23 (1976): 435–47 (435–37), which in effect critiques the editors for not using MS W as a “best text” (as would Greetham [[note 74](#) above] and others).
- 78 Samuels, “Scribes and Manuscript Traditions,” 6.
- 79 The four others are *iv.37 yeueþ* for *[gy]ueþ* (with Hm), *x.204, ayein* for *a[g]ein* (with Hm; YOC²CLMR read *ayeins*), and *xviii.298* and *xix.386, yaf* for *[g]af* (with OC²BMF and C²B respectively). I rely here on the apparatus of Kane and Donaldson, *The B Version*. Burrow and Turville-Petre, pointing out that “Langland uses the <g> forms of ‘give, forgive’ for alliteration and the SW Midlands <3> forms elsewhere,” remark that “of the fifty occasions on which L has the <g> spelling, all but one alliterate, and that one (Bx.19.341) is spelt *gafin* all manuscripts and therefore must be archetypal. In contrast ... W quite often use[s] the <3> forms in lines alliterating on /g/” (“Choice of Copy-Text”). Yet “quite often” overstates the matter: so far as I am aware, these five instances – none unique, one shared with L, and two counted among the forty-nine alliterating *gaf* forms – make up all of W’s erroneous readings of <y> for <g>.
- 80 For trenchant discussion of the first three of these issues, see Stephen A. Barney, “A Revised Edition of the C Text,” *YLS* 23 (2009): 265–88 (279–80 on the

topic of normalization). On the question of whether MS W does in fact record Langland's usage with regard to final *-e* see Hoyt N. Duggan, "Langland's Dialect and Final *-e*," *SAC* 12 (1990): 157–91, which is based on the conviction that Langland adhered to the same b-verse constraints that governed other poets, seeing W's usage as in some ways departing from the poet's, as well as Duggan's "retractions," which sees Langland only vaguely aware of, and possibly not adherent to, those constraints at all: "Notes on the Metre of *Piers Plowman*: Twenty Years On," in *Approaches to the Metres of Alliterative Verse*, ed. Judith Jefferson and Ad Putter (Leeds: Leeds Texts and Monographs, 2009), 159–86.

- 81 Barney writes, "The distinction between substantives and accidentals often blurs, especially in poetry, when the phonological shape of a word is of critical importance and often bears on discrimination of variants as well. An unsolved problem, for example ... is whether to treat Chaucer's spelling of final *-e* as substantive or accidental" (*Studies in "Troilus,"* 11). Janet Cowen and George Kane assert that final *-e* is a characteristic of the "form of the poetry" and "certainly not an accidental in Greg's sense, since it is an immediate feature of the artistic form of the poetry" (*Geoffrey Chaucer: "The Legend of Good Women,"* ed. Cowen and Kane [East Lansing: Colleagues, 1995], 112, 143). Joseph A. Dane objects that "[w]hat Greg meant by defining such things [as spelling variants and punctuation] as accidentals is that they were in the province of the scribe or editor," which is where he places final *-e* (review of Cowen and Kane, *SAC* 18 (1996): 200–205 [202–203]), but their point, and mine, is precisely that this is not just a spelling variant (at least in situations in which scribes copied according to pronunciation) and is in the province of the author. Discussions on the point with regard to Langland are much rarer.
- 82 See [note 36](#). I first proposed this in my 2011 book *The Lost History of "Piers Plowman,"* xv–xvii. Horobin has recently argued against such an approach on the grounds that Bx is of a mixed dialect and that this "places too much faith in ... the authority of MS X; in the case of the B version a better representative of the dialect of this text would surely be that of either L or R. While this would not allow us to quote Langland in a pure and consistent dialect, such as we find in the London English of MS W, it would bring us closer to the dialect of Bx and thus the closest we can come to the dialect of the B holograph, and perhaps even to the mixed usage of the poet himself" ("Langland's Dialect Reconsidered," in *Pursuing Middle English Manuscripts and their Texts: Essays in Honour of Ralph Hanna*, ed. Simon Horobin and Aditi Nafde [Turnhout: Brepols, 2017], 63–75 (75)). It is unclear why Horobin assumes that Bx's language differed from that of the C version: Burrow and Turville-Petre say that they "can determine very little of the language of the [B] archetype" (*The B-Version Archetype*, Introduction, 1v.1, "Language"). More to the point, it is not the case that the language of Bx is the closest we can get to Langland's dialect within the B tradition. For "the revision copy" of C was "a scribally copied B manuscript" in which his revisions and additions were recorded and added (Russell and Kane, *The C Version*, p. 89). By Horobin's own definition, this revision copy of C must be closer to Langland's language, whether

SW Midlands or, as Horobin argues, of mixed dialect, than is the language of the “earliest and most authoritative copies of Langland’s works” (75; see also 66): and this copy of C, the closest to which is MS X, attests the language of a B manuscript earlier than all those on which Horobin focuses, including Bx itself, whatever the nature of its own language.

4 Looking for the Scribe of Huntington Hm 114

- 1 See especially G. H. Russell and Venetia Nathan, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript in the Huntington Library,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 26 (1963): 119–30 (121); Patricia R. Bart, “Intellect, Influence, and Evidence: The Elusive Allure of the Ht Scribe,” in *Yee? Baw for Bokes: Essays on Medieval Manuscripts and Poetics in Honor of Hoyt N. Duggan*, ed. Michael Calabrese and Stephen H. A. Shepherd (Los Angeles, CA: Marymount Institute Press, 2013), 219–43.
- 2 Noelle Phillips, “Compilation Reading: Richard Osborn and Huntington Library MS HM 114,” *YLS* 28 (2014): 65–104; Ralph Hanna, “The Scribe of Huntington HM 114,” *SB* 42 (1989): 120–33. For descriptions of Hm 114 see Hanna, 129–30 and <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/digitalscriptorium/huntington/HM114.html>, from C. W. Dutschke with the assistance of R. H. Rouse et al., *Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, 2 vols. (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1989); of Lambeth 491, see Hanna, 130–31 and *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. Ralph Hanna and David Lawton, EETS o.s. 320 (Oxford University Press, 2003), xx–xxiii.
- 3 E.g., Windeatt, *Troilus and Criseyde*, 36–54; Ralph Hanna, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Stanford University Press, 1996), 115–29. Harley 3943 is described by Hanna, “Scribe of Huntington HM 114,” 129, and Robert Kilburn Root, *The Manuscripts of Chaucer’s “Troilus” with Collotype Facsimiles of the Various Handwritings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), 17–24.
- 4 Chapter 2 of Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, is on this scribe; Helen Killick, “Treason, Felony and Lollardy: A Common Petition in the Hand of Richard Osborn, Clerk of the Chamber of the Guildhall, 1400–c. 1437,” *Historical Research* 89 (2016): 227–45. Mooney and Stubbs refer to Osborn as “the clerk of the chamber, or chamberlain’s clerk, also called the ‘controller’” (9), while the chapter’s title calls him “Chamber Clerk,” a good translation of “clericus camerarii civitatis London,” as he was described in his appointment as “supervisor of the will of the wealthy and pious widow, Dame Margery Nerford, in 1417,” as Caroline M. Barron notes (*London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200–1500* [Oxford University Press, 2004]), 184 n.79).
- 5 See David Bowsher, Tony Dyson, Nick Holder, and Isca Howell, *The London Guildhall: An Archaeological History of a Neighbourhood from Early Medieval to Modern Times* (Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2007), 177. “The building of this house on land adjoining two shops,” say Mooney and Stubbs, “was part of a major redevelopment project inside the Guildhall precinct in the first four decades of the fifteenth century” (*Scribes and the City*, 30), a claim

that, I suspect, is intended to connect his prominent position with the subsequent building of the library in the 1420s (below, [note 11](#)). But as Bowsher et al. write, “The extensive redevelopment programme of virtually the whole Guildhall precinct was begun in 1411, under the mayoralty of Thomas Knolles” (*London Guildhall*, 181). The construction of Osborn’s house was a reward for his work on the Blackwell Hall market of the latter 1390s. The three decades between the completion of Guildhall College in 1382 and Knolles’s initiative in 1411 witnessed only the construction of a new tower and vicarage at St. Lawrence Jewry, a new porch on the Guildhall building, possibly a timber building of unknown purpose in the yard, and little else. See [ibid.](#), 167–81.

6 Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 184.

7 [Ibid.](#), 183. His salary was very generous, too: in the *Liber Albus* John Carpenter (common clerk, 1417–38) notes that “the clerk of the Chamberlain shall receive in part for his labour one half of the sum that arises from the twelve pence taken for the entry of writs of franchise; and further, he shall receive for his labour what the auditors of the Chamberlain’s account may think proper to allow him, at their discretion”: *Liber Albus: The White Book of the City of London*, trans. Henry Thomas Riley (London, 1861), 43, translated from LMA, COL/SC/01/012, fol. 17v, in an important passage discussed below.

8 Penny Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers in the City of London 1300–1550* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 17, 16. Doyle’s discovery was reported in Hanna and Lawton, *The Siege of Jerusalem*, xxii, and with more detail by Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 99 n.72, and Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 23.

9 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 27.

10 [Ibid.](#), 140.

11 [Ibid.](#), 37.

12 Lawrence Warner, “Impossible *Piers*,” *RES* 66 (2015): 223–39 (227 n.19); see 226–27 on Osborn. See [Chapter 5](#) on these other clerks. The scribe’s identification as Osborn plays a central role in Killick, “Treason, Felony and Lollardy,” and Pérez-Fernández, “Shared Exemplars,” and figures as well in a few other of the recent studies of Hm 114, whose main arguments, however, are on the whole not much affected by this chapter’s de-attribution.

13 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 18, 27.

14 [Ibid.](#), 23, citing Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 181.

15 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 24.

16 Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 181 (her emphasis).

17 [Ibid.](#) (my emphasis), citing *Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis, vol. 1: Liber Albus Compiled A.D. 1419*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley (1859; Cambridge University Press, 2012), 48; *Liber Albus*, trans. Riley, 43.

18 See Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 95, their Fig. 5.7.

19 See also Kerby-Fulton, review of Mooney and Stubbs, *MÆ* 84 (2015): 154–56 (155).

20 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 24.

21 [Ibid.](#), 25.

- 22 See *Wardens' Accounts and Court Minute Books of the Goldsmiths' Mistery of London, 1334–1446*, ed. Lisa Jefferson (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2003), 383 n.216, citing *OED*, s.v. “embezzle” (v.), 1(b). I would like to record my gratitude to Lisa Jefferson for her generosity in sharing her extensive knowledge of the Goldsmiths' Register of Deeds, which she is editing.
- 23 *Ibid.*, xvi n.14 (trans. Jefferson), which Mooney and Stubbs cite, and 383 (French on both xvi main text and 382). This is Minute Book A+a, p. 120.
- 24 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 34 (quotation), 24–25 n.20 on the translation, which I quote below.
- 25 Hanna reports Hm 114's height as 295 mm (“Scribe of Huntington HM 114,” 129), Dutschke et al. as 215 mm (*Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*), and Root as 8¾ inches (= 222 mm; *Manuscripts of Chaucer's “Troilus,”* 35), so I take Hanna's 295 to be a typographical error for 215 (his figures for the size of the writing area, 165 × 100mm, match Dutschke et al.'s). For Lambeth's measurements see Hanna, 130.
- 26 *Wardens' Accounts*, xvi n.14 (trans. Jefferson), Minute Book A+a, p. 120.
- 27 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 27.
- 28 See Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers*, 8–11 for an introductory overview. I am grateful to Sheila Lindenbaum for first pointing me towards the Plea and Memoranda Rolls.
- 29 Reginald R. Sharpe wrote that “each clerk had been in the habit of keeping in his own custody the books or calendars upon which he happened to be engaged for the time being. This would sufficiently account for the irregular, and at times haphazard, manner in which entries have been made in (at least) the first two Letter-Books, and for their overlapping each other in point of chronology”: *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: A, 1275–1298*, ed. Sharpe (London, 1899), iii–iv, available at www.british-history.ac.uk.
- 30 This excludes headers and marginal notes, which are more difficult to attribute and date. This list indicates only where his hand can be found: a citation could mean that he wrote only two or three lines on the membrane or that he wrote all of it; ranges of membrane or folio numbers are sometimes all his, but often interspersed with other hands, whether earlier, contemporaneous, or later. Reference codes for collections in the LMA are: Common Pleas CLA/023/CP/01; Deeds and Wills, CLA/023/DW/01; Pleas of Land CLA/023/PL/01; Original Bills CLA/024/02/001 (MC. 1/1), .../002 (MC. 1/2), .../003 (MC. 1/2A); Plea and Memoranda Rolls: CLA/024/01/02; *Liber Albus*, COL/SC/01/012; Letter Book H COL/AD/01/008, Letter Book I, .../009. This last instance provides a model for finding a particular item within a reference code: thus, roll 130 of the Pleas of Land is CLA/023/PL/01/130. An exception is the Deeds and Wills rolls through 133, where the number of the roll is one higher than the final section of the reference code (i.e., roll 133 is .../132; 133X is .../133; with 134 the reference code again matches the roll number). These are searchable in <http://search.lma.gov.uk/>, usually to the level of the larger collection (e.g., Letter Book I, Plea and Memoranda Roll 128), but in one

instance going down a further level, the short item in Mayor's Court Original Bills MC. 1/1 (other bills here cited do not have their own entries): see 9 Henry IV below.

- 31 Identification by Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 53.
- 32 Identification *ibid.*, 25–27. They refer to “samples” of the Hm 114 scribe's hand in Letter Book H, but cite only this; one presumes they mean as well two or three of those listed in 6, 7, and 11 Henry IV.
- 33 This is the sole item from the Mayor's Court File Original Bills collection to have its own entry in the LMA catalogue, as CLA/024/02/001/194: “Plaint of John Persale, bladesmith, that throughout the whole of the year last past each week [h]e bought of one William Cambrigg, ironmonger, 8 lbs. of steel at 2d. per lb. by his weights, which weights are false, under-weight and not of the correct heaviness” (emendation for “be”).
- 34 See above, [note 8](#) on Doyle's identification of this and the subsequent entries from the *Liber Albus* and Letter Book I here cited, though all folios from 331r of the former (Book IV), and fols. 232v–33r, 234v of the latter (6–7 Henry V) of the latter, are my additions. He lists ?213r–14r as well for *Liber Albus*, but that text is not in his hand though the marginal glosses might be. I use the older foliation of the *Liber Albus* as employed as well by Riley's edition and William Kellaway, “John Carpenter's *Liber Albus*,” *Guildhall Studies in London History* 3 (1978): 67–84, source of these dates: 40r–51v “probably written around 1417–19” (70); 179r is at end of contents for Book III “compiled before 1419” (77); 250–55r has material deriving from Book II and a *terminus a quo* of February 1407 (83); Book IV “probably compiled during 1418–19” (70). Mooney and Stubbs in general use the newer foliation (see *Scribes and the City*, II n.26), though in [Chapter 2](#), when reporting Doyle's identification of this material they use the older one (see 23). Mooney and Stubbs say Doyle identifies all of Letter Book I, fol. 224v as this scribe's, but it is only the final five lines; they qualify 229r–31v as “probably” his, but that attribution is quite firm; and they assign the Letter Book entries to the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V, but they are from the latter only (23).
- 35 Mooney and Stubbs get the credit for first noting his scribe's hand in this; see above.
- 36 Attribution to the scribe of Hm 114, then not yet in the Huntington collection and (influentially) called “Phillipps 8250” in error for “8252,” by Root, *Manuscripts of Chaucer's “Troilus,”* 35. The error was noted in Valerie Edden, “The Phillipps Manuscript of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*,” *The Library*, ser. 5, 27.1 (1972): 53.
- 37 M. L. Samuels, in observations of 1968 as reported by Rosamund Allen, “Some Sceptical Observations on the Editing of *The Awntyrs off Arthure*,” in *Manuscripts and Texts: Editorial Problems in Later Middle English Literature*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), 5–25 (7 n.18), seems to have been the earliest to recognize that Lambeth 491 was in the same hand as Harley 3943 (Hand 1) and Hm 114. Samuels's comments on these three manuscripts' near-identical language is cited as well in the first published attribution, A. I. Doyle, “The Manuscripts,” in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry*

and its Literary Background: Seven Essays, ed. David Lawton (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), 88–100 (94).

- 38 Identified by Killick, “Treason, Felony and Lollardy.”
- 39 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 21.
- 40 W. Nelson Francis, “Graphemic Analysis of Late Middle English Manuscripts,” *Speculum* 37 (1962): 32–47 (44). For him Hm 114 is Phillipps 8250 (*recte* 8252; see above, [note 36](#)). A more recent and impressionistic discussion of Harley 3943’s relative formality compared with Hm 114’s is Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 93–94. See the online version of Dutschke et al.’s catalogue (above, [note 2](#)) for links to images of five openings of Hm 114 plus first recto and final verso; the *Troilus* as discussed by Francis is represented among these by fols. 193r, 208v–9r, hence my citation of examples from 193r. As of time of writing, a facsimile of Harley 3943, fol. 15r in his hand is available on the www.medievalscribes.com database. Single-page facsimiles of all *Troilus* MSS are also in Root, *Manuscripts of Chaucer’s “Troilus.”*
- 41 Francis, “Graphemic Analysis,” 44. The other Hm 114 types he finds are: with a serif at bottom only; with no serif; with serifs top and bottom; with a serif at the top only; and with a long final loop (36).
- 42 Francis sets up his essay as a response to the absence of “evidence” and “proof” behind Root’s attribution (*ibid.*, 35, 43), but does not offer an explicit conclusion beyond that we need to engage in such studies on the basis of manuscripts attributable to the same hand on incontrovertible evidence before adding to their oeuvre (45). His claim that the different uses of <th> and thorn between these manuscripts either illustrate a scribe’s change of habit (if Harley is the earlier) or need to be accounted for on stylistic grounds (if Hm 114 is earlier) makes sense only if he does endorse Root’s attribution (*ibid.*).
- 43 For Samuels and Doyle see [note 37](#); Hanna, note 2 and *London Literature*, 29 (though his comment that the *LALME* editors “did not know” Lambeth 491 shows that he did not know that it was the *LALME* editor Samuels who first attributed that manuscript to the Hm 114 scribe); Wakelin, note 40. Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 17–18 follow Hanna. A. S. G. Edwards expresses “unease” about their methodology of using letter forms as a basis of scribal identification of these disparate items (review of Mooney and Stubbs, *The Library*, ser. 7, 15.1 [2014]: 79–81 [80]), but his purpose is not to question the attribution of these items to the same scribe, which these other scholars proposed instead on the grounds of aspect, language, and text.
- 44 Respectively, Francis, “Graphemic Analysis,” 45; Hanna, “Scribe of Huntington HM 114,” 121.
- 45 Hanna, “Scribe of Huntington HM 114,” 126–27.
- 46 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 21.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 21 (**h**, **s**), 21–23 (**I** [22 is taken up with images]).
- 48 See *ibid.*, 22, figs. 2.4 (Lambeth Palace Library MS 491, fol. 184r) and 2.5 (Letter Book I, fol. 223r) for respective examples. Color images of Lambeth fols. 133r, 65r, and 193v (informal hand) are in Nicole Eddy, “The Romance of History: Lambeth Palace MS 491 and Its Young Readers,” in *New Directions*

in *Medieval Manuscript Studies and Reading Practices: Essays in Honor of Derek Pearsall*, ed. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, John J. Thompson, and Sarah Baechle (University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), 300–23, figs. 15.1, 15.3, and 15.4. Also, Hm 114, fols. 185v–86r, 192v, among the pages in the online facsimile, displays the informal hand.

- 49 Hanna, “Scribe of Huntington HM 114,” 122, on the basis of paper stocks and the time it takes for them to travel and be exhausted; Doyle: “second quarter of the fifteenth century” (“Manuscripts,” 94). Patricia R. Bart deems a later date more plausible, given that the pages with relatively early *Hache* watermarks (ca. 1419) “do not make up anything like a quire, let alone a booklet that might have been copied as a separate project at an earlier time. The *Hache* stock was doubtless one left over from a time rather earlier than most of the papers used in [Hm 114], and must simply have been run in by the scribe at his convenience, when it happened to be the one available,” concluding that nothing she has uncovered “would contradict a dating in the 1430’s, though only some of the identified watermarks would allow a date of copying before that decade” (“The Whole Book: Textual, Codicological, Paleographical and Linguistic Artifacts in Huntington Library Hm 114 (Ht) of *Piers Plowman*,” unpubl. Ph.D. dissertation [University of Virginia, 2007], 11.i, “Date”).
- 50 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 33, 32.
- 51 To be specific: the Hm 114 scribe, its Hand 1, either copied the poem through 1v.196 (except for 111.1744–71, Troilus’s song), from which copy one quire went missing and was provided by Hand 2 a bit later, or he and Hand 2 worked together on the project. Either way, the outer bifolium of the opening quire was lost, as was the inner bifolium of Hand 2’s, whose work now occupies fols. 57r–62v, with lines 111.1079–1288, 1429–1638. A few decades later Hand 3 provided a new outer bifolium of quire 1, with 1.1–70, 498–567; filled in a line left blank by Hand 2 on 59r; and completed Hand 1’s final quire, now 68r–70v, lines 1v.197–406. See Root, *Manuscripts of Chaucer’s “Troilus,”* 17, and Windeatt, *Troilus and Criseyde*, 71.
- 52 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 32 n.40. Root had first proposed “that the scribe of Hand 3 found an unfinished and defective MS. of the poem, the work of two different scribes” and that after fixing a few things up he handed it over to Hand 4 (*Manuscripts of Chaucer’s “Troilus,”* 17). Hanna remarks, “Ff. 56 and 63 (the end of quire 7 and the head of quire 9) show particularly heavy wear, a fact which suggests an extensive period as an unbound fragment” (“Scribe of Huntington HM 114,” 129).
- 53 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 89.
- 54 This feature noted in the profile for the “Exeter College 129 Scribe” in www.medievalscribes.com. Daniel W. Mosser’s discovery of this scribe’s copying of Lydgate’s *Troy Book* in Oxford, Exeter College MS 129 is reported in Mosser and Linne R. Mooney, “The Case of the Hooked-g Scribe(s) and the Production of Middle English Literature, c.1460–c.1490,” *ChauR* 51 (2016): 131–50 (139 and n.18).

- 55 www.medievalscribes.com entry for the Exeter College 129 Scribe's work on this MS.
- 56 Mosser and Mooney, "The Case of the Hooked-g Scribe(s)," 139; they call him "Affiliated Hooked-g Scribe 3."
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 His status as Goldsmiths' clerk was first argued by Caroline M. Barron, who reads the form in question (Minute Book A+a, p. 57) as *Usk*; she says that Jefferson "has read the name as *Vok* rather than *Usk* and so has failed to recognize the notorious London scrivener": "New Light on Thomas Usk," *Chaucer Newsletter* 26.2 (2004): 1 (available from <http://newchaucersociety.org>), citing Jefferson, *Wardens' Accounts*, 198–99. Yet Jefferson does elsewhere mention *Usk* (208), and in any case one could as easily say that Barron has failed to recognize that every other medial *s* on this folio, including *assent*, *resseu*, *d'estre*, *mesme*, and *vesture* in this memorandum, takes the long form rather than the sigma, looking very much like an *o*, in the term at issue. The reading *Vsk* has since been confirmed by Rebecca McNamara's matching of this hand to *Usk*'s autograph *Appeal* (Kew, National Archives, E 163/5/28; see "'Diversity in Setting of Words Makes Diversity in Understanding': Bureaucratic and Political Language in Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love*," *New Medieval Literatures* 14 [2012]: 165–99 [169 n.15]). In addition, seven of the sixteen manuscripts of the Goldsmith John Arderne's *Practica* consulted by Marion Turner have it that one of his patients was "Thomas Uske" (the other nine either read *Voke* or are indeterminate). *Usk* is more likely, she concludes, because *Vok* is otherwise unattested: "Thomas Usk and John Arderne," *ChauR* 47 (2012): 95–105 (97).
- 59 *The Testament of Love*, ed. Gary W. Shawver, based on the edition of John F. Leyerle (University of Toronto Press, 2002), 25–26. This date was first established by Ramona Bressie, "The Date of Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love*," *Modern Philology* 26 (1928): 17–29. Stephen Barney deems this dating "persuasive," pointing out that it "would set back the date of *Troilus* to early 1385 at the latest" (*Riverside Chaucer*, 1020).
- 60 *The Testament of Love*, ed. R. Allen Shoaf (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1998; available from <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams>), introduction, iv, "Usk and His Contemporaries." See also Shawver, ed., *The Testament of Love*, 27–28.
- 61 These borrowings "cannot be convincingly explained as simply memorial retention": A. S. G. Edwards and Derek Pearsall, "The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts," in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1425*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 257–78 (258); "It seems improbable that Usk knew only parts of the poem before its completion": Barney, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 1020.
- 62 See Marion Turner, "Usk and the Goldsmiths," *New Medieval Literatures* 9 (2007): 139–77.
- 63 Jefferson, *Wardens' Accounts*, 212; see n.251 (wondering whether Thomas is the scribe appointed in 1382), 213 and n.122. Barron, "New Light," first suggested the possibility that this referred to Usk.

- 64 Windeatt, *Troilus and Criseyde*, 44. Cf. Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 37.
- 65 Hanna remarks that Harley 3943 “bears no sign that its later continuators were at all aware of, much less interested in, what must have been substantially divergent readings between the exemplar they copied from and the partial copy of *Troilus* they were completing” (*Pursuing History*, 127).
- 66 Turner, “Usk and the Goldsmiths,” 176.
- 67 LMA, DL/C/B/004/MS09171/003 (London Commissary Court wills, register 3), fol. 64v; see Carlin, “Thomas Spencer,” 393–94. Carlin and Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 119, presume this to be Chaucer’s *Boece* but if surviving numbers are any indication it is more likely to be John Walton’s (see [Chapter 1](#), [note 36](#); Carlin, 394 n.30 acknowledges the possibility though still deems it “more likely” to be Chaucer’s).
- 68 See Carlin, “Thomas Spencer,” 388–89 on the lawsuit, 390 on his possible father.
- 69 Simon Horobin, “The Scribe of Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102 and the Circulation of the C Text of *Piers Plowman*,” *YLS* 24 (2010): 89–112.
- 70 *Ibid.*, 101.
- 71 Russell and Nathan, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 121. As for its C text insertions, their variation through passus 1x “is with the X family or across families. But in the insertions from C x onward agreement is much more often with the P family” (Russell and Kane, *The C Version*, 193 n.7). Digby 102 (MS Y) is part of the great XYJP²UD family (*ibid.*, 41–46). But note Bart’s caution: the Hm 114 *Piers*’s “mixing of text from the A, B, and C traditions is thorough, unpredictable and occurs at the level of long passages, single lines, half-lines, phrases and even single words. As a result, any given line, word, or phrase among its 8,620 lines might come from any of the three versions of the text, arbitrarily” (“The Whole Book,” 111.1.5, “Line Numbering: An Unexpected Test”).
- 72 For most of these and other later examples see Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 118–22.
- 73 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 74 *Ibid.*, 34.
- 75 Bart, “Intellect, Influence, and Evidence,” 239 on Spelman; on the latter, see my *The Myth of “Piers Plowman”: Constructing a Medieval Literary Archive* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), chapter 5.
- 76 E.g., McNamara, “Bureaucratic and Political Language.”
- 77 Russell Krauss, “William Chaumbre, Kinsman of Thomas Chaucer,” *PMLA* 49 (1934): 954–55 (955).
- 78 See Albert C. Baugh, “Thomas Chaucer, One Man or Two?” *PMLA* 48 (1933): 328–39 for Thomas’s complaint and the importance of the account in Roll 133X, and, for the evidence of Chaumbre’s familial connection to Chaucer via the Burghersh clan, which was not known to Baugh, Krauss, “William Chaumbre.”
- 79 I piece this together from Plea and Memoranda Roll 40 [formerly A39], membrs. 11r (May 19, 1406), 11v (May 25, 1406), and 15r, relying on and quoting

from Thomas, *Calendar*, 275, 278–79, with a few small alterations of spelling and presentation. Thomas dates the entry on 15r to February 18, 1406 but it is the source for the information that Cecilia showed up on March 2 and that the arbitration was awarded on May 8. Note that the final sentences I quote, which are the final word on the matter, appear on membr. 11v, Thomas, 275, well before the account of the arbitration.

- 80 E.g., the following membrane's account, in English, of two oaths pertaining to the estate of Joan Mohun: Plea and Memoranda Roll 40 [formerly A39], membr. 16r (July 9, 1406), in Thomas, *Calendar*, 279–80.
- 81 Roll 40, membr. 12v; Thomas, *Calendar*, 276.
- 82 Roll 40, membrs. 21v–22v; Thomas, *Calendar*, 285–88. Some of Philip's case is recorded on 21r, in another hand.
- 83 Quoted from *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: I, 1400–1422*, ed. Reginald R. Sharpe (London, 1909; available from www.british-history.ac.uk). Some thirteen years later, as mentioned in passing above, the Hm 114 scribe would record the closing of Ludgate prison (Letter Book I, fol. 228r), which Killick has connected with his 1425 petition regarding the treatment of prisoners in the Tower of London. She endorses the likelihood “that certain prominent civic officials and merchants, motivated by concern about these false accusations” – the closure of Ludgate was in part owing to conspiracies among its inmates, who falsely accused sheriffs and other prominent London figures of felony and treason – “employed Richard Osborn to write a petition highlighting these issues” (“Treason, Felony and Lollardy,” 238–39). If we substitute “this anonymous Guildhall clerk” for her “Richard Osborn” the case still holds up, with the addition of this sad account of women's ill treatment in prison.
- 84 The texts of Hm 114's *Susanna* and Hand 1's Harley 3943 are treated in *LALME* LP 6030, which localizes this scribe to Essex, while Bart, too, remarks of Hm 114's *Piers*: “a remarkably uniform dialect has been imposed on the text, one centered in Essex, with very few examples of spellings that would suggest the dialect of an underlying exemplar that was unlike that of the scribe himself”: “The Whole Book,” v.2, “*Ad Hoc* Correction of Spelling and Uniformity of Dialect.” See also vi, “Linguistic Description,” noting that the *Piers* text “shows no marked divergence from the linguistic profile of the other two.” His English texts in Letter Book I, too, accord with this; see Killick, “Treason, Felony, and Lollardy,” 232. The language of his other English texts has not been systematically studied. Susan E. Hughes has proposed the existence of a “Guildhall English” that influenced Chancery English, but to the degree that this English is the Hm 114 scribe's (seven of the fifty-four English entries she discusses are his) the force of this argument is lessened: “Guildhall and Chancery English 1377–1422,” *Guildhall Studies in London History* 4 (1980): 53–62; these are items Z, BB, CC, DD, EE, a, and b (59–60).
- 85 Sheila Lindenbaum, “London Texts and Literate Practice,” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 284–309 (295, 296).

- 86 Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 100, acknowledging Lindenbaum's discovery (264 n.2). Arthur Bahr has argued for the inclusion of customals and similar compilations (e.g., Andrew Horn's *Liber Horn*) in the category of literature, a point I am here suggesting we push back still further: *Fragments and Assemblages: Forming Compilations of Medieval London* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), 51–104.

5 The Guildhall Clerks

- 1 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 37, 35.
- 2 Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 185, 186.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 187.
- 4 Calabrese, review of Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*. Also, Orietta Da Rold: the book “is a significant contribution to the production and circulation of literature in London in the late medieval period, and constitutes an excellent starting point which needs to be contextualised further against other London based writing environments ... [T]his is an achievement to be celebrated” (review of same, *AMARC Newsletter* 61 [October 2013]: 27–29 [29]).
- 5 Hanna, review of *Scribes and the City*, *TLS* 5750 (June 14, 2013): 29.
- 6 Scribe D is responsible for these Gowers: folios 66r–73v and 113r (line 61)–154r of Trinity R.3.2, plus London, British Library MS Egerton 1991; New York, Columbia University Library MS Plimpton 265; Oxford, Bodleian Library MSS Bodl. 294 and fols. 2r–16v of 902, Christ Church MS 148, and Corpus Christi College MS 67 (identified by Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 177); and Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Library MS Taylor 5, fols. 7r–190r, identified by Jeremy Griffiths, “*Confessio Amantis*: The Poem and Its Pictures,” in *Gower's “Confessio Amantis”: Responses and Reassessments*, ed. A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1983), 163–78 (170 n.19). The Chaucers are BL MS Harley 7334 and Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 198; the *Piers*, Senate House Library, University of London MS SL V.88; the *Trevisa*, BL Add. MS 27944, fols. 2r–7v, 196rb (line 9)–335v; the *Brut*, Manchester, John Rylands Library MS English 103, fols. 1r–126v. The Chaucer, Langland, and *Trevisa* are identified as D's by Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 177, and the *Brut*, by Horobin, “Adam Pinkhurst, Geoffrey Chaucer,” 365 n.25.
- 7 Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 186. Doyle and Parkes call him “a full-time scribe” (“Production of Copies,” 177, 185); Pamela Robinson, “a full-time literary scribe” (review of *Scribes and the City*, 398).
- 8 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 39.
- 9 Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 178.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 45.
- 12 Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 178 (I omit their parenthetical supporting citations).
- 13 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 45, Fig. 3.8.

- 14 Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 178.
- 15 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 47; the forms are displayed on 42–46.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 50.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 54, source of following remark that this must be the chamberlain clerk’s. See their Figure 3.18.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 54.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 54–55. This is roll 118 of the Deeds and Wills, item 96.
- 20 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 55.
- 21 Deeds and Wills, roll 118, item 100. John and Walter appear in A. R. Myers, *London in the Age of Chaucer* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 154–55 and Ruth Bird, *The Turbulent London of Richard II* (London: Longmans, 1949), 62 n.2, 121.
- 22 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 53. This is National Archives E 40/2360, December 1, 6 Henry IV, granting tenements to John Castre and John Marchaunt, whose main text is included in my list of the Hm 114 scribe’s corpus in [Chapter 4](#).
- 23 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 53.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 47. These are folios 197v, 231v, and 233v in the newer foliation Mooney and Stubbs follow (see [Chapter 4](#), [note 34](#)); their “fol. 235v” on *Scribes and the City*, 48, is an error for 233v, as it is correctly identified in Fig. 3.13.
- 26 Available at www.bl.uk/onlinegallery: see left column line 12 *menynge*, right column line 5 *pridde*.
- 27 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 48, 42.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 47; Kellaway, “John Carpenter’s *Liber Albus*,” 70. Mooney and Stubbs quote Kellaway’s remark that Book 111 contains “no document later than 1394” (47, quoting Kellaway, 70), a date that “seems to agree with the dating of his *Piers* manuscript” (48), on the basis of Doyle and Parkes’s judgment that the Ilchester manuscript’s decoration “seems more appropriate to the late fourteenth century than that which appears in D’s other manuscripts, and this manuscript might therefore be taken to represent one of D’s earliest efforts” (“Production of Copies,” 195).
- 29 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 48.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 50.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Mooney and Stubbs reproduce items from fols. 212r–v and 222v of Letter Book I in Carpenter’s hand, which is a small fraction of his work therein (*ibid.*, 88–91, Figs. 5.2–4). Their unsubstantiated claim that “Marchaunt made occasional entries in the Plea and Memoranda Rolls” (54) contains their only reference to that body of material, in which, so far as I know, no one has ever mentioned the appearance of Carpenter’s hand. I have never noticed Scribe D’s hand in the Plea and Memoranda Rolls. See further below.
- 33 Respectively *ibid.*, 55, on the authority of *The Text of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, 8 vols. (University of Chicago Press,

- 1940), 1:226 (who however reverse the folios in question: see below), and Kerby-Fulton, review of Mooney and Stubbs, 155. Others who have accepted that Mooney and Stubbs have identified D as Marchaunt include Daniel Mosser, “A Digital Catalogue of the Pre-1500 Manuscripts and Incunables of the *Canterbury Tales*,” 2nd edn, s.v. “Scribe D=John Marchaunt,” <http://mossercatalogue.net>; Andrew Galloway, “Fame’s Penitent: Deconstructive Chaucer among the Lancastrians,” in *Chaucer and Fame: Reputation and Reception*, ed. Isabel Davis and Catherine Nall (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), 103–26 (125–26); Poos and Rust, “Of *Piers*, Polltaxes and Parliament.”
- 34 The description and digital images of the entire MS are available at www.bl.uk/manuscripts.
- 35 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 55–56.
- 36 In late-medieval London, John Marchaunt the *rakyer* (street cleaner) entered a bond not to cast dung belonging to his own ward into a neighboring ward or to throw it into kennels during rainy weather in 1384; the fishmonger settled a debt to a woodmonger in 1429; and the *loriner* (maker of bridles, stirrups etc.) confirmed that his brother-in-law had leased a tavern in Milk Street called “the Horn in the Hoop” in February 1431 and was sworn as master of that company in 1439. And a(nother?) London fishmonger called “John Markant” (see next paragraph) was sued for non-payment of a debt in 1462. See Thomas, *Calendar ... 1381–1412*, 71 (*rakyer*), and *Calendar of Select Pleas and Memoranda of ... A.D. 1413–1437*, ed. A. H. Thomas (1943; Cambridge University Press, 2014), 227 (fishmonger), 251 and Letter Book K, fol. 180r (*loriner*); and *Court of Common Pleas: The National Archives, CP40 1399–1500*, ed. Jonathan Mackman and Matthew Stevens (London, 2010), [www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/common-pleas/1399–1500](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/common-pleas/1399-1500) (later fishmonger).
- 37 Manly and Rickert, *Text of the Canterbury Tales*, 1:226; see 225–30 for a complete treatment of the Brograves family’s ownership and their connection with Lady Anne Grey (née Barlee), another owner (see fol. 286r–v).
- 38 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 55 n.30; again, their source is Manly and Rickert, *Text of the Canterbury Tales*, 1:226. For the BL catalogue description see note 34.
- 39 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 134, referring to the Manchester *Brut*, which “looks early, the hand resembling the looser, slightly less formal hand of the Langland Ilchester manuscript” (60); see above, note 28 on the early date of the latter.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 65; see 58 and 61 for the proposals that he knew Langland and Gower, respectively. See Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Steven Justice, “Scribe D and the Marketing of Ricardian Literature,” in *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe, and Gower*, ed. Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo (University of Victoria, 2001), 217–37 for the argument that D supervised manuscript production (of MS Taylor 5, at least), worked with the workshop of the elite illuminator Herman Scheere, and attended to the politics and currency of Gower’s poetry – that he was, in short, a major “marketer” of vernacular literature.

- 41 Scribe D's status as a western man was argued by J. J. Smith, "The Trinity Gower D-Scribe and His Work on Two Early *Canterbury Tales* Manuscripts" (1988), in Samuels and Smith, *The English of Chaucer and his Contemporaries*, 51–69. But see now Simon Horobin and Daniel W. Mosser, "Scribe D's SW Midlands Roots: A Reconsideration," *NM* 106 (2005): 289–305.
- 42 Respectively, *LALME* 1:3.6.5; Ralph Hanna, "Sir Thomas Berkeley and His Patronage," *Speculum* 64 (1989): 879–916 (910); and my examination of Rylands MS English 103, fols. 9r, 29v, 62r, and 98r (entire MS available at <https://enriqueta.man.ac.uk/luna> > search "English Brut 103"), featuring the forms *eny* ANY (*LALME* 1:329, dot map 98), *hure* HER (1:310, dot map 23), and *wham* WHOM (1:539, dot map 1106).
- 43 Horobin and Mosser, "Scribe D's SW Midlands Roots," 297.
- 44 So too, of course, does any argument that relies on the identification fade to the extent of that reliance, such as Kathryn Kerby-Fulton's analysis of John Tyckhill's alliterative poem "A Bird of Bishopswood," written on a rent roll for St. Paul's cathedral, 1396–97, on whose dorse are records of payments to John Marchaunt, which, on the basis of *Scribes and the City*, she treats as a "piece of evidence" that "Tyckhill might well have been *actually* connected with Middle English literary circles." She is careful to qualify the case, though: "if Mooney's and Stubbs' identification is correct," this is evidence: "The Clerical Proletariat: The Underemployed Scribe and Vocational Crisis," *JESB* 17 (2014): 1–34 (13–14; her emphasis).
- 45 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 64. Horobin refers to "Scribe D's access to the same exemplar used by Pinkhurst" for Corpus 198 of the *Canterbury Tales* (Cp), based on "[t]he fact that both scribes experienced the same problems in both" the *Monk's Tale* (absence of Adam stanza: see Chapter 6) and the *Merchant's Tale*, whose last hundred lines are in grey ink in Hg and are absent from Cp, among others, "problems that stemmed from the physical makeup of the exemplar" ("Adam Pinkhurst, Geoffrey Chaucer," 365). He cites Estelle Stubbs, "'Here's One I Prepared Earlier': The Work of Scribe D on Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 198," *RES* 58 (2007): 133–53, on Cp, but she points out that "Hg is an independently copied manuscript and has no genetic affiliation with the Cp texts" so that Hg and Cp cannot derive from the identical exemplar as Horobin has it: she thus concludes "either that there were two separate copies which were both missing the same portions of text, or that the correspondence between Hg's change of ink, and the absence of text or the use of different vellum in Cp, devolved on Chaucer's original copytext as the common ancestor" (145–46; on Cp's and Hg's codicological similarities she cites Germaine Dempster, "On the Significance of Hengwrt's Change of Ink in the *Merchant's Tale*," *Modern Language Notes* 63 [1948]: 325–30).
- 46 Doyle and Parkes, "Production of Copies," 196.
- 47 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 75.
- 48 Connolly, "What John Shirley Said about Adam," 97 (see Chapter 1, note 33).
- 49 Horobin, "Thomas Hoccleve," 248. See also my discussion in "Scribes, Misattributed," 78–79, where I reproduce portions of fols. 36r, 62v, and 99r.

- 50 Respectively, Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 125, and Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 39, 76. See [Chapter 2](#) on their recognition that at least one scribe other than B used this motif.
- 51 Deeds and Wills, roll 138, items 6, 12, 43, 56–57, 66; roll 139, items 4, 23, 27, 50; roll 140, items 21 (× 2), 31, 49–50, 53, 60–61; roll 141, items 69, 73, 78, 99, 100; roll 142, items 6, 13, 20; roll 144, items 37, 56, 66, 77.
- 52 M. B. Parkes, “Richard Frampton: A Commercial Scribe c. 1390–c.1420,” in *The Medieval Book and a Modern Collector: Essays in Honour of Toshiyuki Takamiya*, ed. Takami Matsuda, Richard A. Linenthal, and John Scahill (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 113–24 (113–14).
- 53 *Ibid.*, 114–15; Cambridge University Library, MS Mm.5.14, including Guido della Colonna’s *Historia destructionis Troiae*, *Liber magni Alexandrii*, and the Middle English *Siege of Jerusalem*; Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunterian T.4.1 (84), which shares the previous item’s first two texts plus three other Latin travel works (Odoric, Marco Polo, Mandeville); Kew, National Archives DL 42/1–2 (Parkes erroneously lists this as “41/1–2”), the “Great Cowcher” of the Duchy of Lancaster, produced between 1402/3 and 1406/7, and DL 42/192–93, transcript of the previous two volumes (between 1412/13 and 1415/16); BL MS Cotton Claudius D.11, fols. 139r–268v + LMA, Cust. 8, COL/CS/01/008, fols. 137r–290v, *Statuta*; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale MS lat. 3603, Heinrich Suso, *Horologium sapientiae divinae*; and San Marino, Huntington Library MS Hm 19920, *Statuta*.
- 54 On the *Inspeximus*, see Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 109–16; Charter 50 is digitized at <https://search.lma.gov.uk> > search reference code “COL/CH/01/050.” The *Liber Albus* item is fols. 56r–101v, with the Hm 114 scribe’s index at 40r–51v. On the Favent, see Mooney and Stubbs, 117–18. Stubbs, “Richard Frampton and Two Manuscripts in the Parker Library,” *Digital Philology* 4 (2015): 225–62, has more recently and cautiously suggested the possibility that he also copied two manuscripts in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College: MSS 197A, *The Westminster Chronicle* as a continuation of Ralph Higden’s *Polychronicon* for the years 1381–94, and 218, *Le Livre des Seintes Medicines*. The former is somewhat and the latter very unlikely in my judgment, but in any case she is interested in mapping networks of manuscript production, using the Guildhall as a major node, rather than in arguing that these are Frampton’s.
- 55 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 116. On the possible ways this common exemplar reached these scribes see Hanna and Lawton, *Siege of Jerusalem*, lxviii–lxix; see lv–lxxiv on the manuscript affiliations.
- 56 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 117.
- 57 Parkes, “Richard Frampton,” 120.
- 58 See Hanna, *Pursuing History*, 27, on the grounds, first, that the leaf of 205 and the facing fol. 206r, completing the *Brut* and starting the *Siege*, “are more heavily worn than the outside leaves of the quire, suggesting that the quire was left folded open to the last copied text page for some time,” and second, that the scribe engaged in “casting off” in trying to fill folios 206–16, clearly written after the conclusion of the *Siege* beginning on 217r.

- 59 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 108–109.
- 60 *Ibid.*, 111.
- 61 The remaining “other scribes” (*ibid.*, 118–31) are Thomas Usk; John Brynchele; the Petworth Scribe, clerk of the Skinners’ Company in 1441 who copied Chaucer; Robert Lynford, Brewers’ Company scribe who copied *Piers Plowman* (see Chapter 4, notes 67–69); and Hoccleve. To be sure, all these men must have had dealings with the Guildhall; but so did just about everyone who lived in London. Mooney and Stubbs, 122, also mention Thomas Ursewyke (serjeant then recorder of London 1453–71) and Richard Sotheworth (d. 1419). Ursewyke, they say, might have owned Hengwrt and the Trinity Gower, but was not a scribe himself. Sotheworth left “quendam librum meum de Canterbury Tales” to John Stopyndon in his will; the connection with the Guildhall is that he might have been son of Matthew Sotheworth, recorder of London in 1401, who, they say, might originally have owned this Chaucer manuscript. Sotheworth, though, was himself a Chancery clerk, as was Stopyndon, and Matthew Fisher has recently discovered his colophon in one of the four books he bequeathed, suggesting that Sotheworth might well have been the scribe of this now-lost *Canterbury Tales*. The connection is with the Chancery not the Guildhall: “‘Librum meum de Canterbury Tales’: Chaucer’s Other Scribe?,” presented at the Twenty-First Biennial Congress of the New Chaucer Society, Toronto, July 2018.
- 62 See Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 86; Amy Appleford, “The Dance of Death in London: John Carpenter, John Lydgate, and the *Daunce of Poulys*,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38 (2008): 285–314; and Bowsher et al., *London Guildhall*, 208. Mooney and Stubbs date Carpenter’s service as Common Clerk to 1417–37 in their chapter title, but in their text they accurately say that he “retired in or before October 1438” (99, citing Kellaway, “John Carpenter’s *Liber Albus*,” 68). Wendy Scase, building on Mooney and Stubbs’s work, analyzes the ways in which Carpenter’s Guildhall library provided a model for his relation and namesake Bishop John Carpenter’s Carnary Chapel Library at Worcester: “Prelates and the Provision of Books: Bishop John Carpenter’s Carnary Library,” in *The Prelate in England and Europe 1300–1560*, ed. Martin Heale (York Medieval Press, 2014), 127–41 (139–41).
- 63 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 86.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 101.
- 65 Bowsher et al., *London Guildhall*, 208.
- 66 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 89–90.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 93. I refer to rolls 48–50 of CLA/024/01/02; roll 48 (formerly A47), membrs. iv and 4r, for instance, feature zigzags in the lobes ornamenting upper case letters and the aspects are exact matches. Mooney and Stubbs say Kellaway dates the signature in *Liber Albus* to the sixteenth century “because of the florid style of its cadels,” but “because” is their word. His words are: “the name J. Carpenter is written in a large sixteenth-century hand with a bold and elaborate flourish”: “John Carpenter’s *Liber Albus*,” 70.
- 68 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 93. See their Figure 5.6 (94) for a reproduction of fol. 43v, and *The Pierpont Morgan Library Manuscript M.817: A*

- Facsimile*, ed. Jeanne Krochalis (Norman, OK: Published for A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer by Pilgrim Books, 1986).
- 69 Krochalis, *The Pierpont Morgan Library Manuscript M.817*, xix.
- 70 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 89. See 93 for the attribution, and Figure 5.8 (96) for a reproduction of an extract from fol. 1r. See its entry in www.medievalscribes.com for more information and a color facsimile of the complete fol. 1r.
- 71 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 140.
- 72 *Ibid.*, 35, 106.
- 73 Robinson, review of *Scribes and the City*, 395.
- 74 “Will (No. 2) of John Carpenter,” trans. Thomas Brewer, in Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times of John Carpenter, Town Clerk of London* (London, 1856), 131–44 (144). See Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 104–105.
- 75 So far as I am aware there is no evidence that, other than this and MS 244 (see next note), any of the books identified as having a Guildhall connection by Neil Ker had been in the library: Ker, ed., *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd edn (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964), online at <http://mlgb3.bodleian.ox.ac.uk> > search “London: Guildhall”). That list includes any item with a connection to the Guildhall, such as the *Liber Albus*.
- 76 See Carpenter’s will, in Brewer, *John Carpenter*, 139–41. In 1549, William Cecil, secretary to Lord Protector Somerset, had all the library’s volumes delivered to him at Somerset House, but never returned them as promised (on the history of the Guildhall library, including this episode, see Bowsher et al., *London Guildhall*, 208–10). Of these volumes only MS 3042 just mentioned has ever returned, so it is difficult to know what it included. MS 244, French chronicles, is the only volume that seems to have been in the Guildhall library but must not have been with the others upon Cecil’s request. My thanks to Dr. Peter Ross, Principal Librarian, for this information. Mooney and Stubbs point out that this is the same Cecil in whose library was discovered a fragment of the *Troilus* “sewed in the spine of the cover (one could hardly call it a binding) of a sixteenth-century rent book containing surveys of some of the property of the Earl of Essex,” that is, the Cecil fragment (Campbell, “A New *Troilus* Fragment,” 305; see [Chapter 2](#)). They wonder whether this might constitute “[o]ne fragment of evidence,” quite literally, that the collection in the fifteenth-century Guildhall library “did include such texts” of vernacular literary writing, though they acknowledge that Cecil might have inherited the book or that the fragment “might have been inserted by an independent bookbinder to whom the book of accounts was given for binding” (*Scribes and the City*, 106).
- 77 George Shuffelton, “John Carpenter, Lay Clerk,” *ChauR* 48 (2014): 434–56 (454). The note to this sentence cites Jennifer Summit, *Memory’s Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 16–22, but Summit does not mention the Guildhall library. Shuffelton is under the impression that the Guildhall library provided “a lasting home for London’s archives” (454), but the fact that the custumals and other archival materials survived Cecil’s emptying out of the library (see previous note) suggests that such materials “were probably

stored elsewhere in the Guildhall, perhaps in the Aldermen's Court, and may not have been books from the new library" (Bowsher et al., *London Guildhall*, 210).

- 78 Bowsher et al., *London Guildhall*, 208.
- 79 Respectively, Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 35; Hanna, review of *Scribes and the City*; Phillips, "Compilational Reading," 75–80. For an argument that "Lambeth 491 is part of an extended instructional program for the young," see Eddy, "The Romance of History," 317.
- 80 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 35.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 58.
- 82 Russell and Kane, *The C Version*, 194. On the connections between Hm 114's and Scribe D's *Piers* texts the foundational study, still unrivalled, is Wendy Scase, "Two *Piers Plowman* C-Text Interpolations: Evidence for a Second Textual Tradition," *Notes and Queries* n.s. 34 (1987): 456–63.
- 83 Hm 114 (Ph) heads up the alpha family and Campsall (Cl) is part of the gamma family: see Barney, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 1161. Windeatt calls these the "Phetc." and "Cpetc." families (*Troilus and Criseyde*, 37; see 69 for the consistent agreements of Cl with the Corpus [Cp] family). Only ten stanzas, the first few terms of each line missing, survive of B's "Cecil fragment" (see [Chapter 2](#)), Windeatt's "F11," whose affiliations make it "fairly certain" not to be related to alpha/Phetc., "appear to exclude it from" the beta group, and provide conflicting support for any relationship with the gamma/Cpetc. group (Campbell, "A New *Troilus* Fragment," 307). Mooney deems it unlikely that this fragment is the copy referenced in "Adam Scryveyne" and dates it to "the first decade of the fifteenth century" ("Chaucer's Scribe," 103), precisely when she now places Pynkhurst in the Guildhall. The Hm 114 scribe consulted a manuscript from the gamma family for the corrections added to Ph, which Mooney and Stubbs (*Scribes and the City*, 101 n.34) and Pérez-Fernández ("Shared Exemplars," 247–48) speculate might have been Cl or its exemplar; but they do so on the assumption that it is Carpenter's in the first place. Hence this evidence against the attributions in the first place provides the basis for a different argument necessitating those very attributions in Pérez-Fernández's conclusion: "The existence of several copies of *Troilus and Criseyde* within Guildhall is attested by the differences between Ph and H2 [= Harley 3943], copied by Osborn, and Cl, copied by his fellow at Guildhall Carpenter. As a consequence, Guildhall turns out to be an important centre for the production of Middle English literature, a place where the number of manuscripts used as copy-texts was sufficiently high so as to keep within its walls at least three different copies of Chaucer's *Troilus*" (253). Pérez-Fernández does not mention the Cecil fragment.
- 84 Mooney, "Locating Scribal Activity"; Carlin, "Thomas Spencer"; Sobecski, "A Southwark Tale."

6 Hoccleve's Hengwrt, Hoccleve's Holographs

- 1 H. S. Bennett, *Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947), 149, 150.

- 2 Kerby-Fulton, *Opening up Middle English Manuscripts*, xv, as the header of the opening section of her Preface, whose main text begins: “It is not often that we can pinpoint the moment a new field begins to blossom, but in 1978 two scholars of Middle English paleography published an article with implications that would make Middle English manuscript studies mandatory for the larger literary world.” For the identification of Scribe E see Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 182–85.
- 3 Doyle and Parkes, “Paleographical Introduction,” xlv.
- 4 David Lawton, *Chaucer’s Narrators* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985), 127; see 127–29.
- 5 Derek Pearsall, “The Ellesmere Chaucer and Contemporary English Literary Manuscripts,” in Stevens and Woodward, eds., *The Ellesmere Chaucer*, 263–80 (271); he had earlier mentioned the possibility in a parenthetical aside: *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 289.
- 6 Sarah Tolmie, “The Professional: Thomas Hoccleve,” *SAC* 29 (2007): 341–73 (341).
- 7 See Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 245, and Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 123–25, for proposals that he supervised Trinity R.3.2; the former adds Hengwrt to the list. The additions to his scribal corpus will be treated below.
- 8 H. C. Schulz, “Thomas Hoccleve, Scribe,” *Speculum* 12 (1937): 71–81 (72).
- 9 *Thomas Hoccleve: A Facsimile of the Autograph Verse Manuscripts*, introd. J. A. Burrow and A. I. Doyle, EETS s.s. 19 (Oxford University Press, 2002), xxxiv.
- 10 Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 185.
- 11 For descriptions and full facsimile of the holographs, see Burrow and Doyle, *Thomas Hoccleve: A Facsimile*; for the formulary, Elna-Jean Young Bentley, “The Formulary of Thomas Hoccleve,” Ph.D. dissertation (Emory University, 1965), which is being converted to readable files by Helen Hickey for inclusion in The Hoccleve Archive, <http://hocclevearchive.org/hocclevearchive/the-formulary>.
- 12 Doyle, *Facsimile*, xxxvi (“most formal”); Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 182 (rest, citing Schulz, “Thomas Hoccleve, Scribe,” 73).
- 13 Mooney, “Holograph Copy,” 265. The other two reasons she offers are, “first, it and most manuscripts of the *Regiment* have remained in the shadow of the two sumptuously prepared manuscripts of the poem generally agreed to be original presentation copies, British Library MSS Arundel 38 and Harley 4866; second, it was dated to the quarter-century after Hoccleve’s death by J. A. Burrow in his 1994 biography of Hoccleve” (*ibid.*, citing Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve* [Aldershot: Variorum, 1994], 51).
- 14 Mooney, “Holograph Copy,” 272 (outer quotations), 266 (inner: “younger days”).
- 15 *Ibid.*, 272.
- 16 Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 283 n.33.
- 17 Mooney, “Holograph Copy,” 272, 274, the latter citing Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 182.
- 18 Burrow and Doyle, *Facsimile*, xxxiv; also Schulz, “Thomas Hoccleve, Scribe,” 73. Hoccleve’s stint in Trinity R.3.2 features twenty-three **g**’s with an angular

head that appear very rarely in the holographs (Doyle, *Facsimile*, xxxvi, cites fifteen appearances of the angular headed **g** in Trinity R.3.2 but I think that count is a bit conservative). Still, the flat-topped **g** dominates, with 153 appearances.

- 19 Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 283 n.33; see also above at [note 16](#) for his comments on **w**.
- 20 Hoborin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 69.
- 21 Mooney, “Holograph Copy,” 280. Horobin and Mooney say the identification of B as copyist of Trinity B.15.17 is in “no doubt” (“A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 72); Mooney, that the naming of this scribe as Adam Pynkhurst could be asserted “conclusively” (“Chaucer’s Scribe,” 138); and Mooney and Stubbs, that it is “without question” (*Scribes and the City*, 85). This is among the intriguing fault lines in responses to *Scribes and the City*. On the one hand, Calabrese praises Mooney and Stubbs’s “humility,” which “should not stop us from celebrating the revolutionary changes in understanding that this book consolidates and expresses” (review), and Anna Chen has it that their “language is cautious throughout” (“Networks of the Pre-Modern Book,” *JEGP* 114 [2015]: 97–114 [108]); on the other, Edwards remarks that “[t]he general tone throughout does not indicate such levels of uncertainty” as that expressed in their comment that they are “not as certain of some identifications as of others” (review, 81, citing 141), and indeed I do not find any hesitant notes in these identifications. Kerby-Fulton’s caution that “readers should be alert to the complex web of subjunctives throughout” the book (review, 154), which acknowledges both the presence of some caution and the probability that it will have little impact on readers, homes in on the problem: that the “possibly”s modify local comments but never the larger-scale identifications.
- 22 Mooney, “Holograph Copy,” 295, pointing to Tatlock, “The *Canterbury Tales* in 1400,” esp. 128.
- 23 Mooney, “Holograph Copy,” 263.
- 24 Marcia Smith Marzec, “The Latin Marginalia of the *Regiment of Princes* as an Aid to Stemmatic Analysis,” *TEXT* 3 (1987): 269–84 (271).
- 25 Mooney, “Holograph Copy,” 280. In her thesis “Thomas Hoccleve’s ‘De Regimine Principum,’ Sections 12 and 13: A Critical Edition” (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Northern Illinois University, 1980), cxxxiii, Marzec identifies this as a genetic group on the basis of these shared readings: 4538 nedy *corr.*] pore *Ry3Du*; 4659 moot algates] needes muste; 4781 operacioun] occupacioun; 4786 seuretee] sikernessee. Other shared readings not in her edition include: 465 street] way; 488 For swich folk han] Han for such folk; 501 Ne taketh of him] Ne of hym takith; 1155 commun cost/purs] purs commun (Du: comyn). See also next paragraph on line 1307. As there is no critical edition of *The Regiment of Princes*, I rely below on the collation sheets compiled by Charles Blyth and his original collaborators, available at <http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/24688>. Line numbers, punctuation, and subsequent quotations not taken from a manuscript are from *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles

- R. Blyth (Kalamazoo: Published for TEAMS by the Medieval Institute Press, 1999).
- 26 This précis of Marzec's stemma is based on David Greetham, "Phylum-Tree-Rhizome," in Lerer, ed., *Reading from the Margins*, 99–126 (124).
 - 27 Mooney, "Holograph Copy," 280–81.
 - 28 The six delta manuscripts that agree for both 805 and 1023 are: ArDoNeRoRy1Slr. The final manuscripts in this family extant for these readings, Hn2 and Ha1, agree for 805 only (the latter's "xiii" at 1023 probably an error for "xxiii"). The conflated text Sj, too, agrees for both readings, while another conflated text, Ra1, agrees at 805 only. MS Ad agrees at 1023 only. See Marzec, "Latin Marginalia," 282, for a list of manuscripts indicated by these sigla. What Mooney takes to be the reading of all manuscripts save Du and Ry3 at 1877, "thow maist nat be payed," is in fact that of only the alpha group, as the 20+ manuscripts of gamma, delta (save Hn2, not extant here), and epsilon read some form of "it is hard to be payed" (*to* sometimes omitted, *be payed* sometimes transposed). The gamma manuscripts highest up the stemma with this reading are Ed, Qu, and Cc. Two gamma manuscripts, Ry4 (sibling to Qu) and its descendant Ma, agree with alpha.
 - 29 Mooney, "Holograph Copy," 292.
 - 30 *Ibid.*, 290, "because" repeated 292, responding to Marzec, "Latin Marginalia," 271. Since only five stanzas are missing, "one would have to assume a three-quarter-page miniature as the portrait of Chaucer, since Dugdale, like most manuscripts of the *Regiment*, contains four stanzas per page." That these missing stanzas "exactly cover the references to the portrait of Chaucer, discussion of images, and prayers for his soul" supports her alternative: "a scribe might deliberately omit them from a manuscript to which the portrait of Chaucer would not be added, so as not to draw attention to the omission of the portrait itself" (Mooney, 291). While not supporting her own thesis, this point accounts for the portrait's absence from their common epsilon exemplar.
 - 31 Marzec, "Thomas Hoccleve's 'De Regimine Principum'," cxxxiii, though not listing any. I found all of these by consulting the collation tables (see [note 25](#) above).
 - 32 Other unique Ry3 readings: 579 orig. unseur] Ry3 insure; 1050 A goddis] Agodes; 1082 noon] noun; 1243 moneyes] moneie; 1458 tow/touche/thought/trouthe] thogh; 4631 pray] pay, and 4922 your] you. Its scribe uniquely inverts phrases: 510 up be] be up, and garbles things: 1059 Thow] That thow. At 1233 one other unrelated manuscript, Fi2, joins Ry3 in omitting *men*.
 - 33 Mooney, "Holograph Copy," 278, citing Blyth's remark that "it preserves some of Hoccleve's characteristic spellings" (ed., *Regiment of Princes*, 16–17).
 - 34 Blyth, ed., *Regiment of Princes*, 18; the figures here are from Mooney, "Holograph Copy," 278.
 - 35 Mooney, "Holograph Copy," 278; Horobin and Mooney, "A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript," 85–86. See [Chapter 3](#) above.

- 36 Judith A. Jefferson, “The Hoccleve Holographs and Hoccleve’s Metrical Practice,” in Pearsall, ed., *Manuscripts and Texts*, 95–109 (96). Below we will encounter one notable exception.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 99–102 (quotation, 99).
- 38 See further John Burrow, “Some Final *-e*’s in the Hoccleve Holographs,” in Calabrese and Shepherd, *Yee? Baw for Bokes*, 45–53 (46).
- 39 Likewise, both “Six marc þat sit to my **hert** so colde” (935) and “But weleaway so is myn **hert** wo” (1958) have nine syllables for lacking metrically necessary *-e* on *herte*, which is also how “Hoccleve always spells that word” in the holographs, “reserving the spelling without *-e* for ‘hart’ (deer)” (*Regiment of Princes*, 23, noted also by Burrow, “Some Final *-e*’s,” 50).
- 40 Jefferson, “Hoccleve Holographs,” 103. Likewise Burrow, “Some Final *-e*’s,” 47: “Where his syllable count required that the *-e* should not be elided, he usually resorts to the fuller form *-en*” (Du reads *desporte* in 1903); *Write* is two syllables as per discussion above. Other typical eleven-syllable lines in the Royal MS are 5 (see Blyth, ed., *Regiment of Princes*, 22), 7, 20, 29, 37, 49, 61, 64, 74, 78, 163, 249, 290, 305, 479, 480, 555, 582. Other nine-syllable lines include: 1 (see below, [note 41](#)), 72, 164, 177, 193, 199, 201, 232, 265, 289, 521, 530.
- 41 Fol. 34v of both, here in Arundel’s spelling. Similarly, Blyth observes that Arundel 38’s line 1 has correct *restlees* (as does Harley 4866; *restelees* in Ry3), which he prints thus not for that reason, though, but because the holographs show it to be correct by analogy (ed., *Regiment of Princes*, 19).
- 42 Twelve-syllable lines include “A poore olde hoore man cam walkynge by me” (122; *recte* “hoor,” “walkyng”; Blyth retains *walkynge*) and “And ful seelde is þat yonge folke wyse been” (147; *recte* “yong folk”); Du is correct for both readings. See also lines 131, 136.
- 43 Mooney, “Holograph Copy,” 295; Horobin and Mooney, “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript,” 93; Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 37.
- 44 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 123.
- 45 See two pieces in *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions*: M. C. Seymour, “The Manuscripts of Hoccleve’s *Regiment of Princes*,” 4 (1974): 255–97, describing forty-two, plus A. S. G. Edwards, “Hoccleve’s *Regiment of Princes*: A Further Manuscript,” 5 (1984): 32, and for the fragment, Richard Firth Green, “Notes on Some Manuscripts of Hoccleve’s *Regiment of Princes*,” *British Library Journal* 4 (1978): 37–41. A compact list of all forty-four is Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve*, 50–51.
- 46 Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 127, source of following quotation too.
- 47 *Ibid.*, citing Mooney, “Some New Light on Thomas Hoccleve,” *SAC* 29 (2007): 293–340 (310–12).
- 48 Respectively, Mooney, “Some New Light,” 312; Nicholas Perkins, “Haunted Hoccleve? *The Regiment of Princes*, The Troilean Intertext, and Conversations with the Dead,” *ChauR* 43 (2008): 103–39 (133 n.5); Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 243.
- 49 Mooney, “Some New Light,” 312.

- 50 *Regiment* 1961–62; *Lydgate's Fall of Princes*, ed. Henry Bergen, 4 vols., EETS e.s. 121–24 (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), Book 1, Prol.252. “The lack of specific information” about the supposed Chaucer–Hoccleve friendship “is all the more remarkable in view of other autobiographical passages in Hoccleve, which abound with specific, realistic details. If Hoccleve had really known Chaucer and studied under him, surely he would have had more to tell us”: Jerome Mitchell, *Thomas Hoccleve: A Study in Early Fifteenth-Century English Poetic* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1968), 118.
- 51 Mooney, “Some New Light,” 309–10, which identifies 144 items from The National Archives in Hoccleve’s hand (322–40); Helen Killick, “Thomas Hoccleve as Poet and Clerk,” Ph.D. diss. (University of York, 2010), adds 913 in the C 81 series (of which 596/1351 is the new Chaucer item; see her discussion, page 85), two in E 28, and eleven on behalf of non-Privy Seal institutions or individuals, such as King’s Council; see page 36 for these figures and her appendix for a full list. Given Killick’s reliance on the arguments of Mooney, “Holograph Copy,” regarding the change in Hoccleve’s hand over time (e.g., 41–42), some of these identifications might be subject to revision; her discussion of the difficulties of attribution and her criteria for including these (35–51), however, is convincing and well presented.
- 52 Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 243.
- 53 “Awake!”: *Regiment* 132; *Troilus* 1.729; I cite *Boece* 1.pr2.1–20 (“But tyme is now”) from Ralph Hanna and Traugott Lawler’s *Riverside* edition. See Perkins, “Haunted Hoccleve?,” 110–12 on the Boethian source here, and his appendix (122–31) for the parallels between Hoccleve and Chaucer. On the absence of clear responses to Chaucer in Hoccleve’s works see, e.g., Mitchell, *Thomas Hoccleve*, 118–22.
- 54 Perkins, “Haunted Hoccleve?,” appendix, here citing B. J. Whiting with the collaboration of Helen Wescott Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings Mainly before 1500* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), M 50. On Pandarus’s use of proverbs see, e.g., Karla Taylor, “Proverbs and the Authentication of Convention in *Troilus and Criseyde*,” in *Chaucer’s “Troilus”: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (London: Scholar, 1980), 277–96.
- 55 John J. Thompson, “After Chaucer: Resituating Middle English Poetry in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Period,” in Pearsall, ed., *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies*, 183–98 (191). He cites Harley 7333 and Coventry, City Record Office, MS Accession 325/1, both ca. 1450–60, as including both Hoccleve and Chaucer (189–90). On the Dugdale scribe’s copying of New College 314 see Stephen Partridge, “A Newly Identified Manuscript by the Scribe of the New College *Canterbury Tales*,” *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700* 6 (1997): 229–36.
- 56 Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 238.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 239.
- 58 Doyle and Parkes, “Paleographical Introduction,” xlv.
- 59 Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 237.

- 60 *Ibid.* See above, [note 17](#) on the appearance of such an angular-headed **g** in the Trinity Gower where it is still however far outnumbered by the flat-topped form.
- 61 Doyle and Parkes, “Paleographical Introduction,” xlv; Mosser says Hand C “could be the same scribe” as that of Arundel 38, a possibility that, he says, “adds to the suspicion of an early Hoccleve connection with Hg” (“Manuscript Description,” paras. on “Hands” and “Provenance”). See Arundel 38’s entry in www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ to view many folios: “note especially the **W** form at the beginning of stanza 3” in fol. 65r, available at that site, “the **a** graphs, majuscule **T**; the forms for **g**, though not identical, have many points of congruency,” writes Mosser. Horobin rightly uses that same phrase, “not identical,” with regard to Hand C and that of Arundel 38 (“Thomas Hoccleve,” 232), but Doyle and Parkes do not claim otherwise, and in any case they are closer in my judgment than are those of Hand C and Hoccleve.
- 62 Horobin says that the scribe is doing so at “Thomas Hoccleve,” 233.
- 63 Horobin attributes Daniel Mosser’s speculation that Pinkhurst was dead by this point to his inability “to account for Hoccleve’s filling of these gaps rather than Pinkhurst himself,” which he rejects (*ibid.*, 238, citing Mosser, “‘Chaucer’s Scribe,’ Adam, and the Hengwrt Project,” in Connolly and Mooney, eds., *Design and Distribution*, 11–40 [37]). But perhaps Mosser considered the idea that Hoccleve was supervisor only to reject it since it in fact does not account for Hoccleve’s filling of the lines: why would a supervisor in close contact with Scribe B not bring him in to fix these problems?
- 64 Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 238.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 245, source of following quotation too.
- 66 Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 166–67.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 185.
- 68 Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 244; Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 167.
- 69 Doyle and Parkes, “Production of Copies,” 167 and n.12.
- 70 *Ibid.*, 166.
- 71 Lawton, *Chaucer’s Narrators*, 127, cited in support of his argument by Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 247.
- 72 Lawton, *Chaucer’s Narrators*, 127.
- 73 Barney, *Studies in “Troilus,”* 78; see [Chapter 1](#) at note 54. Thanks to Eric Weiskott for this scansion.
- 74 Lawton, *Chaucer’s Narrators*, 128. Cf. [Chapter 1](#)’s discussion of A. S. G. Edwards’s suggestion that “Adam Scryveyne” is not by Chaucer since its vocabulary is not Chaucerian.
- 75 Lawton, *Chaucer’s Narrators*, 129.
- 76 Pearsall, “The Ellesmere Chaucer,” 271; also, Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 241–42.
- 77 Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 244; also Pearsall, “The Ellesmere Chaucer,” 271.
- 78 Horobin, “Thomas Hoccleve,” 250.
- 79 For the proposal that Thomas was Geoffrey’s literary executor, see John M. Bowers, “The House of Chaucer & Son: The Business of Lancastrian Canon-Formation,” *Medieval Perspectives* 6 (1991): 135–43.

Conclusion

- 1 Deeds and Wills, roll 113, items 97 and 98, cited in Christianson, *Directory of London Stationers*, 149; Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 101 and n.15.
- 2 “Anglo-American Legal Tradition,” <http://aalt.law.uh.edu>.
- 3 Andrew Prescott, “Administrative Records and the Scribal Achievement of Medieval England,” *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700* 17 (2012): 173–99 (179).
- 4 Stubbs, “‘Here’s One I Prepared Earlier’,” 153.
- 5 Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” 98, 105 n.33. In *Scribes and the City* Mooney and Stubbs date Hengwrt to ca. 1399 (68), and see previous note for Stubbs’s similar argument regarding Corpus 198. Let me take this opportunity to say that I am unconvinced by Kathleen L. Scott’s dating of Ellesmere as “no later than 1405” and thus a dating of Hengwrt to pre-1400 (“An Hours and Psalter,” 106). She gives no evidence other than her sense that no limner would employ such decorations in, say, 1410. I cannot imagine what such evidence would entail, and agree with Stubbs that “it is perhaps unwise to emphasise such a narrow date-slot” (“‘Here’s One I Prepared Earlier’,” 141; Stubbs still emphasizes the “important repercussions” such a redating would have).
- 6 Mosser, “‘Chaucer’s Scribe,’ Adam and the Hengwrt Project,” 11, 38.
- 7 Horobin, “Adam Pinkhurst, Geoffrey Chaucer,” 364.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 355. See also Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 71–72. A color facsimile is available in *The British Inheritance: A Treasury of Historic Documents*, ed. Elizabeth Hallam and Andrew Prescott (London: British Library and Public Record Office, 1999), 31; a black-and-white one is in Mooney and Stubbs, 72–73, Fig. 4.3.
- 9 Horobin, “Adam Pinkhurst, Geoffrey Chaucer,” 352.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 355, source of next two quotations (r; “more striking”) as well; I silently omit the parenthetical references to his figures.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 367 (outer two quotations), 357–58 (inner quotation: “little prior”).
- 12 *Ibid.*, 356.
- 13 See Manly and Rickert, *Text of the Canterbury Tales*; Blake, *Textual Tradition of the “Canterbury Tales”*; Ruggiers, *Facsimile*.
- 14 Clarke, *Chaucer and Italian Textuality*, 135, 162.
- 15 Partridge, “‘The Makere of this Boke’,” 113.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 138 (outer two quotations), 126 (inner quotation: “apology and request”).
- 17 For trenchant discussion of the theoretical and ethical questions surrounding the physical and digital access to Middle English manuscripts, one that begins, ironically, with the author’s account of having to ask the British Library to fetch Harley 7334 from a display case so she could examine it, see Siân Echard, “House Arrest: Modern Archives, Medieval Manuscripts,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30 (2000): 185–210.
- 18 Koster, “Masters and Commanders,” 24.

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